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VOL. II.

THE APOSTASY

LUTHER

CHAPTER XI

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE GREAT APOSTASY

1. Allies among the Humanists and the Nobility till the middle of 1520

As his work progressed the instigator of the innovations received offers of support from various quarters where aims similar to his were cherished.

In the first place there were many among the Humanists who greeted him with joy because they trusted that their ideals, as expressed in the "*Epistolæ obscurorum virorum*," would really be furthered by means of Luther's boldness and energy. They took his side because they looked upon him as a champion of intellectual liberty and thus as a promoter of noble, humane culture against the prevalent barbarism.

Erasmus, Mutian, Crotus Rubeanus, Eobanus Hessus and others were numbered amongst his patrons, though, as in the case of the first three, some of them forsook him at a later date. Most of the Humanists who sought, in verse and prose, to arouse enthusiasm for Luther in Germany were as yet unaware that the spirit of the man whom they were thus extolling differed considerably from their own, and that Luther would later become one of the sternest opponents of their views concerning the rights of reason and "humanity" as against faith. Meanwhile, however, Luther not only did not scorn the proffered alliance, but, as his letters to Erasmus show, condescended to crave favour in language so humble and flattering that it goes far beyond the customary protestations usual among the Humanists. He also drew some very promising Humanists into close

relation with himself, for instance, Philip Melanchthon and Justus Jonas, whom he won over to his cause at an early date. Crotus Rubeanus, the principal author of the "*Epistolæ obscurorum virorum*," sought to renew his old acquaintance with his friend by letter in October, 1519. To him Luther appeared as the man of whose courage in opposing tyrants all the world was talking, and who was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Crotus, at the instigation of Hutten, was anxious to bring about an understanding between Luther and the Knight Franz von Sickingen.[1]

The nobility was another important factor on whose support Luther was later to rely.

Ulrich von Hutten, the Franconian Knight and Humanist, a typical representative of the revolutionary knights of the day, speaks to the Monk of Wittenberg in the same devout terms as Crotus. The language, well padded with quotations from the Gospel, which he adopts to please Luther and the Reformers, makes a very strange impression coming from him, the libertine and cynic. His first dealings with Luther were in January, 1520, when, through the agency of Melanchthon, he promised him armed protection should he stand in need of such. The message was to the effect, that Franz von Sickingen, the knight, would, in any emergency,[2] offer him a secure refuge in his castle of Ebernburg. As a matter of fact Sickingen, in 1520, made over this castle—called the "Hostel of Justice"—to Hutten, Bucer and Œcolampadius as a place of safety. Representatives of the nobility who had fallen foul of the Empire there made common cause with the theologians of the new teaching.

As yet, however, Luther felt himself sufficiently secure under his own sovereign at Wittenberg. He maintained an attitude of reserve towards a party which might have compromised him, and delayed giving his answer. The revolutionary spirit which inspired the nobility throughout the Empire, so far as we can judge from the sources at our disposal, was not approved of by Luther save in so far as the efforts of these unscrupulous men of the sword were directed against the power of Rome in Germany, and against the payments to the Holy See. His own appeals to the national

[1] "Hutteni opp.," ed. Böcking (Lipsiæ, 1859, *seq.*), 1, p. 433.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 320 *seq.*

feeling of the Germans against the "Italian Oppression," as he styled it, were in striking agreement with the warlike proclamations of the Knights against the enslaving and exploitation of Germany.

Thus sympathy, as well as a certain community of interests, made the Knights heralds of the new Evangel.

In February, 1520, Hutten, through the intermediary of Melanchthon, again called the attention of Luther, "God's Champion," to the refuge offered him by Sickingen.[1] Luther did not reply until May, nor has the letter been preserved; neither do we possess the three following letters which he wrote to Hutten. Cochlæus, his opponent, says, he had seen "truly bloody letters" written by Luther to Hutten.[2] He does not, however, give any further particulars of their contents; how the words "bloody letters"—probably an unduly strong expression—are to be understood may be gathered from some statements of Luther's regarding another offer made him about the same time.

The Knight Silvester von Schauenberg, a determined warrior, at that time High Bailiff of Münnerstadt, declared he was ready to furnish one hundred nobles who would protect him by force of arms until the termination of his "affair."[3] Luther made Schauenberg's letter known amongst his friends and adherents. He informs Spalatin, that "Schauenberg and Franz von Sickingen have insured me against the fear of men. The wrath of the demons is now about to come; this will happen when I become a burden to myself."[4] "A hundred nobles," he repeats in another letter, "have been promised me by Schauenberg in the event of my fleeing to them from the menaces of the Romans. Franz Sickingen has made the same offer."[5]

He had already, several months before this, spoken openly in his sermon "On Good Works" (March, 1520) of the intervention of the worldly powers which he would like

[1] "Hutteni opp.," ed. Böcking (Lipsiæ, 1859, *seq.*), 1, p. 320 *seq.*

[2] "*Vidimus certe cruentas eius litteras ad Huttenum.*" C. Otto, "Joh. Cochläus," 1874, p. 121, note. Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," 2^{18}, p. 116.

[3] Schauenberg's letter of June 11, 1520, in Luther's "Briefwechsel," ed. Enders 2, p. 415.

[4] On June 17, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 443.

[5] To Wenceslaus Link, July 20, 1520, Letters, ed. de Wette, 1, p. 470 ("Briefwechsel," 2, p. 444).

to see, because the spiritual powers do nothing but lead everything to ruin.[1]

Hutten, who was more favourably disposed towards an alliance than Luther, continued to make protestations of agreement with Luther's views and to hold out invitations to him. On June 4 he wrote to him among other things: "I have always agreed with you [in your writings] so far as I have understood them. You can reckon on me in any case." "Therefore, in future, you may venture to confide all your plans to me."[2] In another letter Hutten gave him to understand that, on account of the action of the Papal party, he would now attack the tyrant of Rome by force of arms,[3] at the same time informing also the Archbishop of Mayence, and Capito, of his resolution.[4] Luther was so carried away by this prospect that he wrote to Spalatin that if the Archbishop of Mayence were to proceed against him (Luther) in the same way as he had done against Hutten, viz. by prohibiting his writings, then he would "unite his spirit [meaning his pen] with Hutten's," and the Archbishop would have little cause to rejoice; the latter, however, "by his behaviour would probably put a speedy end to his tyranny."[5]

In the autumn of 1520 it was said that, near Mayence, Hutten had fallen upon the Papal Nuncios Marinus Caraccioli and Hieronymus Aleander, who were on their way to the Diet at Worms; Luther believed the report, which was as a matter of fact incorrect, that Hutten had attacked the Nuncios and that it was only by chance that the plot miscarried. "I am glad," he wrote at that time, "that Hutten

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 20, p. 267; Weim. ed., 6, p. 258. The "*insignis turbula*," which Luther announces in a letter to Spalatin of February, 1520 ("Briefwechsel," 2, p. 344), is not the "revolution of the nobility which Hutten planned," but the ecclesiastical and political storm to be roused by Luther's own action.

[2] Text in Luther's "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 409 (better than in Böcking, 1, p. 355). At the head of the letter are the words, "*Vive libertas.*" The phrase, "*Iubet ad se venire N. te, si tutus istic satis non sis,*" must refer to Sickingen. Before this, Hutten says: "*Si vi ingruent, vires erunt adversum, non tantum pares, sed, ut spero, superiores etiam.*"

[3] "*Se iam et litteris et armis in tyrannidem sacerdotalem ruere.*" Luther writes thus to Spalatin on September 11, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 478. Cp. *ibid.*, p. 488: "*Armis et ingenio rem tentans.*"

[4] Cp. Enders, 2, p. 480, note 5.

[5] "*Iungam Hutteno et spiritum meum,*" etc. Letter of September 11, 1520, quoted above.

has led the way. Would that he had caught Marinus and Aleander!"[1]

Luther's threats to use brute force soon became a cause of annoyance, even to certain of his admirers. We see this from a friendly warning which Wolfgang Capito addressed to him in the same year, namely, 1520. After recommending a peaceable course of action he says to him: "You affright your devoted followers by hinting at mercenaries and arms. I think I understand the reason of your plan, but I myself look upon it in a different light." Capito advises Luther to proceed in a conciliatory manner and with deliberation. "Do not preach the Word of Christ in contention, but in charity."[2]

He had thus been forewarned when he received from Hutten, that turbulent combatant, a confidential account of his work and a request to use his influence with the Elector in order that the latter might be induced to lend his assistance to him and his party; the Prince was "either to give help to those who had already taken up arms or at least, in the interests of the good cause, to shut his eyes to what was going on, and allow them to take refuge in his domains should the condition of things call for it."[3] Hutten, with his proposed alliance, became more and more importunate. To such lengths Luther was, however, not inclined to go; he prized too highly the favour in which he stood with his sovereign to be willing to admit that he was in favour of civil war or a supporter of questionable elements. In his reply he thought it necessary to declare himself averse to the use of arms, notwithstanding the fact that he hailed with joy Hutten's literary attacks which, according to his own expression, "would help to overthrow the Papacy

[1] To Spalatin, November 13, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 523. The "attack" was supposed to have taken place in the beginning of November. But Aleander, in the letters he sent to Rome in the middle of December, does not speak of an actual attack, but merely of threats addressed by Hutten to the Archbishop of Treves, and reported by the latter to Aleander. Cp. A. Wrede, "Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Karl V," Bd. 2, Gotha, 1896, p. 460 f., and P. Kalkoff, "Die Depeschen des Nuntius Aleander vom Wormser Reichstag,"[2] Halle, 1897, pp. 32, 46.

[2] Letter of December 4, 1520, in "Briefwechsel Luthers," 3, p. 5 f. The able politician Capito served Luther well also at a later date. It was chiefly owing to him that the carrying out of the Worms proscription was prevented.

[3] Letter of December 9, 1520, Böcking, 1, p. 435 ff.

more speedily than could have been anticipated."[1] We learn from his own lips that he wrote to Hutten, saying, "he did not wish to carry on the struggle for the Gospel by means of violence and murder." Writing of this to his friend Spalatin, at Worms, he adds a reflection, intended for the benefit of the court: "The world has been conquered, and the Church preserved by the Word, and through the Word it will be renewed. Antichrist who rose to power without human assistance will also be destroyed without human means, namely, by the Word."[2]

On the other hand, in a letter to Staupitz, who was already at that time staying at Salzburg, he again makes much of the importance of Hutten's and his friends' literary work for the advance of the new teaching. "Hutten and many others are writing bravely for me. . . . Our Prince," he adds, "is acting wisely, faithfully and steadfastly," and as a proof of the favour of the Ruler of the land he mentions that he is bringing out a certain publication in Latin and German at his request.[3]

"The Prince is acting faithfully and steadfastly," such was probably the principal reason why Luther refrained from joining the forward movement as advocated by the Knights of the Empire. The clever Elector was opposed to any violent method of procedure and was unwilling to have his fidelity to the Empire unnecessarily called in question. To Luther, moreover, his favour was indispensable, as it was of the utmost importance to him, in the interests of his aims, to be able to continue his professional work at Wittenberg and to spread abroad his publications unhindered from so favourable a spot. He was also not of such an adventurous disposition as to anticipate great things from the chimerical enterprise proposed by Hutten's Knights. He was, however, aware that the religious revolution he was furthering lent the strongest moral assistance to the liberal tendencies of the Knights, and he on his part was very well

[1] Luther to Spalatin, December 15, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 20. If the Papacy be not overthrown, the alternative is "*aut ultima dies instat.*"

[2] "*Nollem vi et caede pro evangelio certari,*" etc. To Spalatin, January 16, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 73.

[3] "*Princeps noster ut prudenter et fideliter ita et constanter agit,*" etc., February 9, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 85. Luther was then engaged on the "Assertio," "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 156. "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 91 ff. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 55.

satisfied with the moral help afforded by their party. His coquetting with this party was, nevertheless, a dangerous game for Germany. As is well known, Sickingen appealed in exoneration of his deeds of violence, and Hutten in defence of his vituperation, to the new gospel which had recently sprung up in the German land.

Efforts have frequently been made to represent Luther as treating the efforts of the party opposed to the Empire with sublime contempt. But it is certain "he was as little indifferent to the enthusiastic applause of the Franconian Knight [Hutten] as to the offers of protection and defence made him by Franz von Sickingen and Silvester von Schauenberg, the favourable criticism of Erasmus and other Humanists, the encouraging letters of the Bohemian Utraquists, the growing sympathy of German clerics and monks, the commotion among the young students, and the news of the growing excitement amongst the masses. He recognised more and more clearly from all these signs that he was not standing alone."[1]

His language becomes, in consequence, stronger, his action bolder and more impetuous. He casts aside all scruples of ecclesiastical reverence for the primacy of Peter which still clung to him from Catholic times and he seeks to arrogate to himself the rôle of spokesman of the German nation, more particularly of the universal discontent with the exactions of Rome. Both are vividly expressed in his book "Von dem Bapstum tzu Rome" which he wrote in May, 1520, and which left the press already in June.

He addressed his book "Von dem Bapstum tzu Rome" to a very large circle, viz. to all who hitherto had found peace of conscience and a joyous assurance of salvation in fidelity to the Church and the Papacy. He sought to prove to them that they had been mistaken, that the Church is merely a purely spiritual kingdom; that the riches of this kingdom are to be obtained simply by faith without the intervention of priestly authority or the hierarchy; that God's Kingdom is not bound up with communion with Rome; that it exists wherever faith exercises its sway; that such a spiritual commonwealth could have no man as its head, but only Christ. Ecclesiastical authority is to him no longer what he had at first represented it, an authority to rule entrusted to the clerical state, but a gracious promise of Divine forgiveness and mercy to consciences seeking salvation.

[1] Böhmer, "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung,"[2] p. 64.

His new dogmatic or psychological standpoint, with its tendency to tranquillise the soul, is noticeable throughout.

In the same work he deals angrily with the prevailing financial complaints of the Germans against Rome. He tells the people, in the inflammatory language of Hutten and Sickingen, that in Rome the Germans are looked upon as beasts, that the object there is to cheat the "drunken Germans" of their money by every possible thievish trick from motives of avarice. "Unless the German princes and nobles see to it presently, Germany will end in becoming a desert, or be forced to devour itself."[1] A prediction which was sadly verified in a different sense, indeed, from that which Luther meant, though largely owing to his action. The German princes and nobles did indeed do their share in reducing Germany to a state of desolation, and the misery of the Thirty Years' War stamped its bloody seal on Luther's involuntary prophecy.

In the same year, 1520, Luther hurled his so-called "great reforming writings," "An den Adel" and "*De captivitate babylonica*," into the thick of the controversy. They mark the crisis in the struggle before the publication of the Bull of Excommunication.

Before treating of them, however, we must linger a little on what has already been considered; in accordance with the special psychological task of this work, it is our duty to describe more fully one characteristic of Luther's action up to this time, viz. the stormy, violent, impetuous tendency of his mind. This, as every unprejudiced person will agree, is in striking contrast to the spiritual character of any undertaking which is to bring forth lasting ethical results and true blessing, namely, to that self-control and circumspection with which all those men commissioned by God for the salvation of mankind and of souls have ever been endowed, notwithstanding their strenuous energy.

The necessity of these latter qualities, in the case of one who is to achieve any permanent good, has never been better set forth than by Luther himself: "It is not possible," he says in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer, "that any man of good will, if really good, can become angry or quarrelsome when he meets with opposition. Mark it well, it is assuredly a sign of an evil will if he cannot endure contradiction."[2] "But deep-seated pride cannot bear to be thought in the wrong, or foolish, and therefore looks upon all others as fools and wicked."[3] He declares that these passionate and self-seeking men are the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 277 ff.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 85 ff.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 103; Erl. ed., 21, p. 191.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 91 and 173.

"worst and most shameful in the whole of Christendom," forgetting that he himself was classed by his contemporaries and pupils among these very men.[1] If he really was desirous of hearing the voice of Christ speaking within him, as he actually believed he did hear it, then he ought not to have allowed that voice to be drowned by his passionate excitement. Men chosen by God had always been careful to await the Divine inspirations with the greatest composure of mind, because they knew well how easy it is for a troubled mind to be deaf to them, or to mistake for them the deceptive voice of its own perverse will.

The writing already mentioned, "Von dem Bapstum tzu Rome," contains the saddest examples of Luther's unbridled excitement, and of the irritation which burst into a flame at the least opposition to his opinions.

It is directed against the worthy theologian of Leipzig, Augustine Alveld, a Franciscan, who had ventured to take the part of the Apostolic See, and to gauge Luther's unfair attacks at their true value. Luther falls upon this learned friar with absolutely ungovernable fury, calls his book the "work of an ape, intended to poison the minds of the poor laymen," and him himself "an uncouth miller's beast who has not yet learnt to bray." "He ought to have too much respect for the fine, famous town of Leipzig [whence Alveld wrote] to defile it with his drivel and spittle."[2]

Alveld, however, may have consoled himself with the fact, that Rome and the Papacy were the object of Luther's wildest rage: "The Roman scoundrels come along and set the Pope above Christ." But he is "Antichrist of whom the whole of Scripture speaks . . . and I should be glad if the King, the Princes and all the Nobles gave short shrift to the Roman buffoons, even if we had to do without episcopal pallia. How has Roman avarice proceeded so far as to seize on the foundations made by our fathers, on our bishoprics and livings? Who ever heard or read of such robbery? Have we not people who stand in need of such that we should enrich the muleteers, stable-boys, yea, even the prostitutes and knaves of Rome out of our poverty, people who look upon us as the merest fools, and who mock at us in the most shameful fashion."[3]

Such unrestrained violence, which tells of a bad cause, is not merely the result of Luther's embittered state of feeling arising from the struggle with his opponents; we notice it in him almost from the outset of his public career, and it is evident both in his utterances and in his writings.

The ninety-five Theses, of which the wording was surely strong enough, were followed by his first popular writing, the "Sermon on Indulgences and Grace," which ends with a furious outburst against his adversaries; whatever they might advance was nothing but "idle tattle"; he will not "pay much heed to it"; "they are merely dullards who have never so much as

[1] See, for instance, Oldecop's statements, vol. 1, pp. 24, 280.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 323; Erl. ed., 27, p. 138.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 322, 136.

sniffed the Bible," but are infatuated with their "threadbare opinions."[1] The exclamation of Duke George of Saxony at the Disputation at Leipzig : "Das wallt die Sucht," might be taken as the watchword for the whole of the disputatious and passionate course Luther pursued, from the nailing up of the Theses to the advent of the Bull of Excommunication. It is not deliberate and calm logic which leads him on from step to step, rather he advances by leaps and bounds, and allows himself to be carried away in his excitement against his opponents to still stronger outbursts against the Church, sometimes, it is true, merely for the pleasure of trouncing his enemies and winning the applause of readers as quarrelsome as himself. Only a few months after the publication of the Theses, he wrote in this sense to a friend : "The greater the opposition, the further I advance ; the former propositions I leave to be barked over, and set up others in order that they may fall upon them also."[2]

At the same time, however, he declares that his only crime is that, "he teaches men to place their hopes in Christ alone, not in prayers, merits and works."[3]

The Dominican, Silvester Prierias, in his Dialogue directed against Luther, had touched upon the Indulgence Theses, though only cursorily ; Luther was, however, intensely annoyed by the circumstance of his having replied from Rome, and in his character of Master of the Sacred Palace, for that Luther's true character should be unmasked at Rome could prove extremely dangerous to him ; he was also vexed because Prierias upheld the authority of the Pope, both as regards indulgences and Church matters in general. Luther says, it is true, that as regards his own person he is ready to suffer anything, but that he will not allow any man to lay hands on his theological standpoint, his exposition of Scripture and (as he insists later) on his preaching of the Word and Gospel ; "in this matter let no man expect from me indulgence or patience."[4]

He certainly proved the truth of the latter promise by his first coarse writing against Prierias, who thereupon entered the lists with a rejoinder certainly not characterised by gentleness. In his answer to this, Luther's anger knew no bounds. It would be most instructive and interesting to compare the two replies of the Wittenberg professor in respect of the advance in his controversial theological position exhibited in the second reply when placed side by side with the first. We must, however, for the sake of brevity, content ourselves with selecting some characteristic passages from Luther's second reply, which appeared at the same time as the work on the Papacy, directed against Alveld.[5]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 246.

[2] To Sylvius Egranus, preacher at Zwickau, March 24, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 173.

[3] To Johann Staupitz, March 31, 1518, *ibid.*, p. 176.

[4] "Von dem Bapstum tzu Rome," "Werke," Erl. ed., 27, p. 138 ; Weim. ed., 16, p. 323.

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed. 6, p. 328 ; "Opp. Lat. var.," 2, 80.

" This wretched man wants to avenge himself on me as though I had replied to his feeble jests in a ridiculous manner ; he puts forth a writing filled from top to bottom with horrible blasphemies, so that I can only think this work has been forged by the devil himself in the depths of hell. If this is believed and taught openly in Rome with the knowledge of the Pope and the Cardinals, which I hope is not the case, then I say and declare publicly that the real Antichrist is seated in the Temple of God and reigns at Rome, the true Babylon ' clothed in purple ' (Apoc. xvii. 4), and that the Roman Court is the ' Synagogue of Satan ' (*Ibid.*, ii. 9)." He unjustly imputes to Prierias the belief that the Bible only receives its inward value from a mortal man (the Pope). " Oh, Satan," he cries, " Oh, Satan, how long do you abuse the great patience of your creator ? . . . If this [what is contained in Prierias's book] is the faith of the Roman Church, then happy Greece, happy Bohemia [which are separated from Rome], happy all those who have torn themselves away from her, and have gone forth from this Babylon ; cursed all those who are in communion with her ! "

He goes so far as to utter those burning words : " Go, then, thou unhappy, damnable and blasphemous Rome, God's wrath has at last come upon thee . . . let her be that she may become a dwelling-place of dragons, an habitation of every impure spirit (Isaias xxxiv. 13), filled to the brim with miserly idols, perjurers, apostates, sodomites, priapists, murderers, simoniacs and other countless monsters, a new house of impiety like to the heathen Pantheon of olden days." He inveighs against the teaching of Rome with regard to the primacy ; " if thieves are punished by the rope, murderers by the sword, and heretics by fire, why not proceed against these noxious teachers of destruction with every kind of weapon ? Happy the Christians everywhere save those under the rule of such a Roman Antichrist."[1] Prierias himself is described by Luther as a " shameless mouthpiece of Satan," and as " a scribe held captive in Thomistic darkness, and lying Papal Decretals."

In a similar fashion Luther, in his controversial writings, heaps opprobrious epithets upon his other opponents, Tetzel, Eck and Emser.

It is true that in their censures on Luther his opponents were not backward in the use of strong language, thus following the custom of the day, but for fierceness the Wittenberg professor was not to be surpassed.

Luther was not appealing to the nobler impulses of the multitude who favoured him when, in 1518, he sought to incite his readers against another of his literary opponents, the Dominican

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 347—p. 107. We shall come back later to the harsh exclamation which occurs in the course of this outburst : " *Cur non magis hos magistros perditionis . . . omnibus armis impetimus et manus nostras in sanguine istorum lavamus ?* " and to the mitigating additions introduced into the Jena edition of Luther's works, see below, p. 55, n. 1.

Inquisitor, Jakob van Hoogstraaten, and his fellow-monks, with the violent assertion that Hoogstraaten was nothing but a "mad, bloodthirsty murderer, who was never sated with the blood of the Christian Brethren"; "he ought to be set to hunt for dung-beetles on a manure heap, rather than to pursue pious Christians, until he had learned what sin, error and heresy was, and all else that pertained to the office of an Inquisitor. For I have never seen a bigger ass than you . . . you blind blockhead, you blood-hound, you bitter, furious, raving enemy of truth, than whom no more pestilential heretic has arisen for the last four hundred years."[1] Is it correct to characterise such outbursts in the way Protestants have done when they mildly remark, that Luther fought with "boldness and without any fear of men," and that, though his onslaught was "fierce and violent," yet he was ever fearful "lest he should do anything contrary to the Will of God"?[2]

Luther, on the other hand, as early as 1518, made the admission: "I am altogether a man of strife, I am, according to the words of the Prophet Jeremias, 'A man of contentions.'"[3]

Hieronymus Emser, who had met Luther at the Leipzig Disputation and before, might well reproach him with his passionate behaviour, so utterly lacking in calmness and self-control, and liken him to "the troubled sea which is never at rest day or night nor allows others to be at peace; yet the Spirit of the Lord only abides in those who are humble, in the peaceable and composed."[4] In another work he laments in a similar way that, "in the schools and likewise in his writings and in the pulpit Luther neither displays devotion nor behaves like a clergyman, but is all defiance and boastfulness."[5]

It was in vain that anxious friends, troubled about the progress of their common enterprise, besought him to moderate his language. It is true he had admitted to his fellow-monks, even as early as the time of the nailing up of his theses, his own "frivolous precipitancy and rashness" ("*levitas et præceps temeritas*").[6] He did not even find it too hard a task to confess to the courtier Spalatin, that he had been "unnecessarily violent" in his writings.[7] But these were mere passing admissions, and, after the last passage, he goes on to explain that his opponents knew him,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 384 ff. "Opp. Lat. var.," 2, p. 294 *seq.*
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 196.
[3] To Wenceslaus Link, July 10, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 211.
[4] "An den Stier von Wittenberg," Bl. A.
[5] "Auff des Stieres tzu Wiettenberg wiettende Replica," Bl. n. 3.
[6] To Johann Lang, November 11, 1517, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 124.
[7] In 1520, soon after February 18, *ibid.*, 2, p. 329.

and should know better than to rouse the hound"; . . . "he was by nature hot-blooded and his pen was easily irritated"; even if his own hot blood and customary manner of writing had not of themselves excited him, the thought of his opponents and their "horrible crimes" against himself and the Word of God would have been sufficient to do so.

Such was his self-confidence that it was not merely easy to him, but a veritable pleasure, to attack all theologians of every school; they were barely able to spell out the Bible. "Doctors, Universities, Masters, are mere empty titles of which one must not stand in awe."[1]

2. The Veiling of the Great Apostasy

Besides his stormy violence another psychological trait noticeable in Luther is the astuteness with which he conceals the real nature of his views and aims from his superiors both clerical and lay, and his efforts at least to strengthen the doubts favourable to him regarding his attitude to the hierarchy and the Church as it then was. Particularly in important passages of his correspondence we find, side by side with his call to arms, conciliatory, friendly and even submissive assurances.

The asseverations of this sort which he made to his Bishop, to the Pope, to the Emperor and to the Elector are really quite surprising, considering the behaviour of the Wittenberg Professor. In such cases Luther is deliberately striving to represent the quarrel otherwise than it really stood.

If the cause he advocated had in very truth been a great and honourable one, then it imperatively called for frank and honest action on his part.

The consequence of his peaceable assurances was to postpone the decision on a matter of far-reaching importance to religion and the Christian conscience. Many who did not look below the surface were unaware how they stood, and an inevitable result of such statements of Luther's was, that, in the eyes of many even among the nobles and the learned, the great question whether he was right or wrong remained too long undecided. He thus gained numerous

[1] To Sylvius Egranus, March 24, 1518, *ibid.*, 1, p. 174.

followers from the ranks of the otherwise well-disposed, and, of these, many, after the true aims of the movement had become apparent, failed to retrace their steps.

In fairness, however, all the means by which the delay of the negotiations was brought about must not be laid to Luther's charge, and to his intentional misrepresentations. It is more probable that he frequently assumed an attitude of indecision because, to his excited mind, the stress of unforeseen events, which affected him personally, seemed to justify his use of so strange an expedient. Be this as it may, we must make a distinction between his actions at the various periods of his agitated life; the further his tragic history approaches the complete and open breach which was the result of his excommunication, the less claim to belief have his assurances of peace, whereas his earlier protestations may at least sometimes be accorded the benefit of a doubt.

To the assurances dating from the earlier stage belong in the first place those made to his Ordinary, Hieronymus Scultetus, Bishop of Brandenburg. To him on May 22, 1518, he forwarded, together with a flattering letter, a copy of his "Resolutions," in order that they might be examined.[1]

"New dogmas," he states, have just recently been preached regarding indulgences; urged by some who had been annoyed by them to give a strong denial of such doctrines, but being at the same time desirous of sparing the good reputation of the preachers—for upon it their work depended—he had decided to deal with the matter in a purely disputatory form, the more so as it was a difficult one, however untenable the position of his opponents might be; scholastics and canonists could be trusted only when they quoted arguments in defence of their teaching, more particularly from Holy Scripture. No one had, however, answered his challenge or ventured to meet him at a disputation. The Theses, on the other hand, had been bruited abroad beyond his expectations, and were also being regarded as actual truths which he had advocated. "Contrary to his hopes and wishes," he had therefore been obliged, "as a child and ignoramus in theology," to explain himself further (in the Resolutions). He did not, however, wish obstinately to insist upon anything contained in the latter, much being problematic, yea, even false. He laid everything he had said at the feet of Holy Church and his Bishop; he might strike out what he pleased, or consign the entire scribble to the flames. "I know well that Christ has no

[1] "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 148. On the date see Kalkoff, "Z. für KG.," 31, 1910, p. 411.

need of me ; He proclaims salvation to the Church without me, and least of all does He stand in need of great sinners. . . . My timidity would have kept me for ever in my quiet corner had not the presumption and unwisdom of those who invent new gospels been carried so far."

When Bishop Scultetus thereupon declared himself against the publication of the Resolutions, Luther promised to obey ; he even made this known to those about the Elector, through Spalatin the Court-preacher. On August 21, 1518, the work nevertheless appeared. Had Luther really been "released" from his promise, as has been assumed by one writer in default of any better explanation ?[1]

Let us consider more closely Luther's letter to Pope Leo X, which has already been referred to cursorily (vol. i., p. 335). As is well known, it accompanied the copy of the Resolutions which, with singular daring, and regardless of the challenge involved in their errors, he had dedicated to the Supreme Teacher of Christendom.[2] Luther had lavished flattery on his Bishop, but here he surpasses himself in expressions of cringing humility.

He prostrates himself at the feet of the Pope with all that he has and is ; it is for His Holiness to make him alive, or kill him, to summon or dismiss, approve or reprove, according to his good pleasure ; his voice he will acknowledge as the voice of Christ, and willingly die should he be deserving of death. He is "unlearned, stupid and ignorant in this our enlightened age," nothing but dire necessity compels him, so he says, "to cackle like a goose among the swans." "The most impious and heretical doctrines" of the indulgence preachers have called him forth as the defender of truth, indeed of the Papal dignity which is being undermined by avaricious money-makers ; by means of the Disputation he had merely sought to learn from his brothers, and was never more surprised than at the way in which the Theses had become known, whereas this had not been the case with his other Disputations. Retract he cannot ; he has, however, written the Resolutions in his justification, from which all may learn how honestly and openly he is devoted to the Power of the Keys. The publication of the Resolutions "under the shield of the Papal name and the shadow of the Pope's protection [Luther is here alluding to the dedication] renders his safety assured."

As a matter of fact, the principal result of the dedication to the Pope was a wider dissemination of the work among

[1] Knaake, in "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 522. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, pp. 170, 177.

[2] On May 30, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 200.

the learned, Luther's Bishop, the weak and uninformed Scultetus of Brandenburg, being likewise hindered from taking any action against his unruly subject. The move, if it really was intentional, had been well thought out.

After a lengthy delay Luther, in accordance with his promise to Miltitz, drafted a second letter to Pope Leo X, on January 5 or 6, 1519.[1]

He, "the off-scouring of humanity, and a mere speck of dust," here declares, as he had done shortly before at Augsburg, that he cannot retract; since his writings are already so widely known and have met with so much support, a retractation would, he says, be useless, and indeed rather injure the reputation of Rome among the learned in Germany. He would never have believed, so he says, that his efforts for the honour of the Apostolic See could have led to his incurring the suspicion of the Pope; he will, nevertheless, be silent in future on the question of indulgences, if silence is also imposed upon his opponents; indeed, he will publish "a work which shall make all see that they must hold the Roman Church in honour, and not lay the foolishness of his opponents to her charge, nor imitate his own slashing language against the Church of Rome," for he is "absolutely convinced that her power is above everything, and that nothing in Heaven or on earth is to be preferred to her, excepting only our Lord Jesus Christ." This letter was not sent off, probably because it occasioned Miltitz some scruples.[2] In any case, it is a document of considerable interest.

Luther assumes an entirely different tone in the historic third and last letter to Leo X, with which, in 1520, he prefaced his work "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen"; this letter was really written after October 13 of that same year.[3]

The very date of the letter has a history. It was published by Luther in Latin and German, with the fictitious date of September 6. The questionable expedient of ante-dating this letter had been adopted by Luther to satisfy the diplomatist Miltitz, and was due to the necessity of taking into account the Papal Bull condemning Luther, which had already been published on September 21, 1520; thereby it was hoped to avoid all appearance of this letter having been wrung from Luther by the publication of the Bull. This was what Miltitz [4] wrote at a time when he still

[1] "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 442.

[2] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, pp. 224, 355.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 3 ff., 39 ff., Erl. ed., 53, p. 41, after the German original; "Opp. Lat. var.," p. 210, in Latin ("Briefwechsel," 2, p. 496).

[4] P. Kalkoff, "Die Miltitziade, eine kritische Nachlese zur Gesch. des Ablassstreites," 1911. Miltitz—a man whose ability was by no means equal to his vanity, and who owed whatever influence he pos-

entertained sanguine hopes of what the letter might achieve in the interests of the Pope and peace.[1] Luther, for his part, looked on the ante-dated letter as a manifesto which might considerably weaken, and to his advantage, the effect of the Bull on public opinion. The vehement blame therein contained regarding the corruption of the Roman Church ought surely to lessen the authority of the excommunication, while the loud appreciation of the person and good qualities of Leo would naturally cause the author of the excommunication (supposing it to have been published subsequently to the letter) to appear either ungrateful, or misled by others.

The Roman Church, in the words of this letter, has become the "most horrible Sodom and Babylon," a "den of murderers worse than any other, a haunt of iniquity surpassing all others, the head and empire of sin, of death and of damnation, so that it would be impossible to imagine any increase in her wickedness even were Antichrist to come in person. Yet you, Holy Father Leo, are seated like a sheep among the wolves, like a Daniel amidst the lions"; Pope Leo, the author goes on to assert with unblushing effrontery, is much to be pitied, for it is the hardest lot of all that a man of his disposition should have to live in the midst of such things; Leo would do well to abdicate. He himself (Luther) had never undertaken any evil against his person; indeed, he only wished him well, and, so far as lay in him, had attempted to assist him and the Roman Church with all his might by diligent, heartfelt prayer. But "with the Roman See all is over; God's endless wrath has come upon it; this See is opposed to General Councils, and will not permit itself to be reformed; let this Babylon then rush headlong to its own destruction!"

After this follow renewed protestations of his peaceableness throughout the whole struggle from the very beginning, attempts to justify the strong language he had later on used against thick-headed and irreligious adversaries, for which he deserved the "favour and thanks" of the Pope, and descriptions of the wiles of Eck who, at the Leipzig disputation, had picked up some "insignificant chance expression concerning the Papacy" so as to ruin him at Rome. This, of course, was all intended to weaken the impression of the excommunication on the public. Another

sessed to his noble Saxon descent—was chosen to bring the Golden Rose to the Elector of Saxony. His instructions were to induce Frederick to abandon Luther's cause and to hand him over to the ecclesiastical judges. Though Miltitz was a mere "*nuntius et commissarius*" with very restricted powers, he assumed great airs. The Elector, who knew his man, soon found means to use him for his own political aims. In September, 1519, when the Golden Rose had duly been handed over, Miltitz's mission was at an end, and he was thereupon engaged for three years by Frederick himself (Kalkoff, p. 33). His further doings revealed more and more both his untrustworthiness and his light-hearted optimism.

[1] To the Elector of Saxony. October 14, 1520, in extract, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 495, n. 3.

bold assertion of his, of which the object was the same, ran: "That I should retract what I have taught is out of the question . . . I will not suffer any check or bridle to be placed on the Word of God which teaches entire freedom, and neither can nor may be bound." "I am ready to yield to every man in all things, but the Word of God I cannot and will not forsake or betray."

Luther also approached the Emperor Charles V in a letter addressed to him at the time when Rome was about to take action. He begged the Emperor to protect him, entirely innocent as he was, against the machinations of his enemies, especially as he had been dragged into the struggle against his will. The letter was written August 30, 1520,[1] and safely reached the Emperor, possibly through the good offices of Sickingen; when it was again submitted at the Diet of Worms such was Charles's indignation that he tore the missive to pieces.

In order rightly to appreciate its contents we must keep in mind that Luther had it printed and published in a Latin version in 1520, together with an "Oblation or Protestation" to readers of every tongue, wherein he offers them on the title-page his "unworthy prayers," and assures them of his humble submission to the Holy Catholic Church, as whose devoted son he was determined to live and die.[2] Nevertheless, at the end of August[3] part of his work "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church" already stood in print, in which, at the very commencement, the Papacy is declared to be the Kingdom of Babylon and the empire of Nimrod, the mighty hunter, and in which, as a matter of fact, an end is made of the whole hierarchy and Church visible.

Luther's Prince, the Elector Frederick, had grave misgivings concerning the hot-headed agitator who had fixed his residence at the University of Wittenberg, though, hitherto, thanks to the influence of Spalatin, his Court Chaplain, he had extended to Luther his protection and clemency. Both the Emperor, who was altogether Catholic in his views, and the laws of the Empire, called for the greatest caution on his part; were the Church's rights enforced as the imperial law allowed, then Luther was

[1] "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 468.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 474 ff., "Opp. Lat. var.," p. 5.
[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 338.

doomed. It was by the express advice of the Elector that Luther drew up the above-mentioned letter to Charles V and the pious "Protestation." It was to these documents that the astute Elector appealed when, towards the end of August, he warned his agent at Rome, Teutleben, of the ostensibly dangerous disturbances which might result in Germany from any violent action against Luther unless he had been previously confuted by "strong and veracious proofs and statements clearly set forth in writing."[1] This letter too had Luther himself for its author, Spalatin having, as usual, acted as intermediary. Spalatin in fact received both documents from him beforehand for revision.[2]

After these few words regarding the object and origin of the celebrated letter to the Emperor, we may go on to quote some of the statements it contains. Luther, at the commencement, protests that he presents himself before Charles "like a flea before the King of kings, who reigns over all." "It was against my will that I came before the public, I wrote only because others traitorously forced me to it by violence and cunning; never did I desire anything but to remain in the retirement of my cell. My conscience and the best men bear me witness that I have merely endeavoured to defend the truth of the Gospel against the opinions introduced by superstitious traditions. For three years I have, in consequence, been exposed to every kind of insult and danger. In vain did I beg for pardon, offer to be silent, propose conditions of peace, and request enlightenment. I am, nevertheless, persecuted, the sole object being to stamp out the Gospel along with me."

Things being thus, "prostrate before him," he begs the Emperor to protect, not indeed one who lies "poor and helpless in the dust," but, at least, the treasure of truth, since he, the greatest secular sovereign, has been entrusted with the temporal sword for the maintenance of truth and the restraint of wickedness; as for himself, he only desired to be called to account in a fair manner, and to see his teaching either properly refuted, or duly accepted by all. He was ready to betake himself to any public disputation, so he declares in the "Protestation," and would submit to the decision of any unprejudiced University; he would present himself before any judges, saintly or otherwise, clerical or lay, provided only they were just, and that he was given state protection and a safe conduct. If they were able to convince him by proofs from Holy Scripture, he would become a humble pupil, and obediently relinquish an enterprise undertaken—this, at least, he would assert without undue self-exaltation—only for the honour of God, the salvation of souls and the

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 339.

[2] To Spalatin, August 23 and 31, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, pp. 464, 471.

good of Christianity, simply because he was a doctor, and without any hope of praise or profit.

This manifesto was sufficient to satisfy the Elector Frederick. The growing esteem in which Luther was held and the delay in the settlement of his case served admirably Frederick's purpose of making himself less dependent on the Emperor and Empire. Calculation and politics thus played their part in an affair which to some extent they shaped.

At a later date, it is true, Luther asserted in the preface to his Latin works, that his success had been the result only of Heaven's visible protection; that he had quietly "awaited the decision of the Church and the Holy Ghost"; only one thing, namely, the Catechism, he had been unable to see condemned by the interference of Rome; to deny Christ he could never consent. He was willing to confess his former weaknesses "in order that—to speak like Paul—men may not esteem me for something more than I am, but as a simple man."[1]

From the pulpit, too, where honest truth usually finds expression, he declared that it was not violence or human effort or wisdom that had crowned his cause with the laurels of victory, but God alone: "I studied God's Word and preached and wrote on it; beyond this I did nothing. The Word of God did much while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my Philip [Melanchthon] and Amsdorf, so that Popery has been weakened and suffered more than from the attacks of any Prince or Emperor. I did nothing; everything was achieved and carried out by the Word."[2] His object here is to oppose the violence and fanaticism of the Anabaptists, and, if he points out to them that he has achieved his mighty work without force of arms, and that the great success of his movement was out of all proportion to the means he could employ as professor and preacher—the truth being that his success was chiefly due to the circumstances of the time—there is much in his contention.

In the circle of his friends, at a later date, he thus expressed his conviction: "I did not begin the difficult business of my own initiative . . . rather it was God who led me in a wonderful manner. . . . All happened in

[1] "Opp. Lat. var.," 4, p. 329 *seq.*

[2] Sermon of 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 28, p. 260 (2nd impression); cp. *ibid.*, p. 220 (1st impression), "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 18.

accordance with God's will."[1] "I thought I was doing the Pope a service [by throwing light upon the question of Indulgences]; but I was forced to defend myself." "Had I foreseen that things would turn out as, thank God, they have, I would have held my tongue; but had I kept silence it would have fared much worse with the Papacy; the Princes and the Powers, enraged at its usurpations, would finally have made an end of it." "I acted with moderation and yet I have brought the Papacy to an evil day."[2]

The genius of history could well hide its face were such statements accepted as reliable testimonies.

Certain extracts from Luther's correspondence with Spalatin deserve special consideration.

The worldly-wise Chaplain of Frederick, the Saxon Elector, frequently gave Luther a hint as to how to proceed, and, in return, his Wittenberg friend was wont to speak to him more openly than to others. It is, however, necessary, in order to arrive at a right appreciation of this correspondence, to distinguish between the letters written by Luther to Spalatin as a personal friend and those he sent him with the intention that they should reach the ruling Prince. It would betray a great lack of critical discrimination were the whole correspondence with Spalatin taken as the expression of Luther's innermost thought. The fact that Spalatin's letters to Luther are no longer extant makes it even more difficult to understand Luther's replies. Nevertheless, it is easy to trace a persistent effort throughout the correspondence, to secure in the Saxon Electorate toleration both for the new teaching and its originator without arousing the misgivings of a prudent sovereign. The Court had to be won over gradually and gently.

Acting on Spalatin's advice, Luther made the following declaration for the benefit of the Elector, on March 5, 1519: "The Roman Decrees must allow me full liberty with regard to the true Gospel; of whatever else they may rob me, I don't care What more can I do, or can I be bound to anything further?"[3]

"If they do not confute us on reasonable grounds and by written proofs," he says, on July 10, 1520, in another letter

[1] Colloquia, ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 178 *seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[3] To Spalatin, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 446: "*Bis monuisti, mi Spalatine, ut de fide et operibus tum de obedientia ecclesiæ Romanæ in apologia mea vernacula mentionem facerem.*"

addressed to Spalatin, but really intended for the Elector, "but proceed against us by force and censures, then things will become twice as bad in Germany as in Bohemia" [an allusion to the Husite apostasy].[1] "Where then can I turn for better instruction?"[2] . . . "Let His Highness the Prince," he here writes, coming to the question of the University professorship which provided him with his means of livelihood, "put me out into the street so that I may either be better instructed or confuted." He, for his part, is ready to resign his public appointment, retire into private life, allow others to take his place, and let all his belongings be burned. But he also thinks it just that the Elector, being personally unable to instruct him, should also refuse to act either as judge or as executioner until a (true ecclesiastical) sentence be pronounced. The principal thing is, so he says, that "the question under discussion has not been solved, and my enemies have not touched it with so much as a single word. The Prince, under these circumstances, may well refuse to punish anyone, even though he be a Turk or a Jew, for he is in ignorance whether he be guilty or not; his conscience bids him pause, and how then can the Romanists demand that he should step in and obey men rather than God?"

Thereupon Frederick, the Elector, actually wrote to Rome that Luther was ready to be better instructed from Holy Scripture by learned judges; no one could reproach him, the Prince; he was far from "extending protection to the writings and sermons of Dr. Martin Luther," or "from tolerating any errors against the Holy Catholic faith."[3]

At the very last moment before the promulgation of the Bull of Excommunication, Luther made offers of "peace" to the Roman Court through Cardinal Carvajal, professing to be ready to accept any conditions, provided he was left free to teach the Word, and was not ordered to retract. This step was taken to safeguard his public position and his future; Spalatin, and through him the Elector, received due notification of the fact on August 23, 1520.[4]

Yet only a few weeks before, on July 10, he had already expressly assured the same friend privately: "The die is cast; I despise alike the favour and the fury of the Romans; I refuse to be reconciled with them, or to have anything whatever to do with them . . . I will openly attack and destroy the whole Papal system, that pestilential quagmire of heresies; then there will be an end to the humility and consideration of which I have made a show, but which has only served to puff up the foes of the Gospel."[5]

[1] "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 433, where he begins, on an enclosed slip; "*Quod si Princeps etiam hoc adiiciat, esse Lutheranam doctrinam,*" etc. (a hint for the Elector's reply to Cardinal Petrucci). Cp. "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 430, n. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 429.

[3] July 10, 1520, "Opp. Lat. var.," 2, p. 351.

[4] "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 464.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 432: "*A me quidem iacta est alea, contemptus est Romanus furor et favor, nolo eis reconciliari nec communicare in perpetuum,*" etc.

He had also not omitted, at the same time, to bring to the knowledge of the Elector, through his same friend at Court, the promise of a guard of one hundred noblemen, recently made by Silvester von Schauenberg; he likewise begged that an intimation of the fact might be conveyed to Rome, that they might see that his safety was assured, and might then cease from threatening him with excommunication and its consequences. "Were they to drive me from Wittenberg," he adds, "nothing would be gained, and the case would only be made worse; for my men-at-arms are stationed not only in Bohemia, but in the very centre of Germany, and will protect me should I be driven away, for they are determined to defy any assault." "If I have these at my back then it is to be feared that I shall attack the Romanists much more fiercely from my place of safety than if I were allowed to remain in my professorship and in the service of the Prince [at Wittenberg], which is what will certainly happen unless God wills otherwise. Hitherto I have been unwilling to place the Prince in any difficulty; once expelled, all such scruples will vanish."[1]

In conclusion, he extols his great consideration for the Prince. "It is only the respect I owe my sovereign, and my regard for the interests of the University [of Wittenberg] that the Romanists have to thank for the fact that worse things have not been done by me; that they escaped so lightly they owe neither to my modesty, nor to their action and tyranny."

All the diplomacy which he cultivated with so much calculation did not, however, hinder his giving free course to the higher inspiration with which he believed himself to be endowed; the result was a series of works which may be numbered among the most effective of his controversial writings. He there fights, to employ his own language, "for Christ's sake new battles against Satan," as Deborah, the prophetess, fought "new wars" for Israel (Judges v. 8).[2]

In Luther we find a singular combination of the glowing enthusiast and cool diplomatist. Just as it would be wrong to see in him nothing but hypocrisy and deception without a spark of earnestness and self-sacrifice, so too, at the other extreme, we should not be justified in speaking of his success as simply the result of enthusiasm and entire surrender of earthly considerations. History discerns in him a combatant full of passion indeed, yet one who was cool-headed enough to choose the best means to his end.

[1] "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 432.

[2] To Conrad Saum, one of his followers, October 1, 1520, *ibid.*, p. 484.

3. Luther's Great Reformation-Works—Radicalism and Religion

It was at the time when the Bull of Excommunication was about to be promulgated by the Head of Christendom that Luther composed the Preface to the work entitled: "An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung."[1] The booklet appeared in the middle of August, and by the 18th four thousand copies were already in circulation, eagerly devoured by a multitude of readers hungry for books of all kinds. Staupitz's warning not to publish it had come too late. "Luther's friends, the Knights, were urging him on, and something had to be done at once."[2]

This inflammatory pamphlet, so patronised by the rebellious Knights, was, with its complaints against Rome, in part based on the writings of the German Neo-Humanists.

Full of fury at the offences committed by the Papacy against the German nation and Church, Luther here points out to the Emperor, the Princes and the whole German nobility, the manner in which Germany may break away from Rome, and undertake its own reformation, for the bettering of Christianity. His primary object is to show that the difference between the clerical and lay state is a mere hypocritical invention. All men are priests; under certain circumstances the hierarchy must be set aside, and the secular powers have authority to do so. "Most of the Popes," so Luther writes with incredible exaggeration, "have been without faith." "Ought not Christians, who are all priests, also to have the right [like them, i.e. the bishops and priests] to judge and decide what is true and what false in matters of faith?"

The work was, as Luther's comrade Johann Lang wrote to the author, a bugle-call which sounded throughout all Germany. Luther had to vindicate himself (even to his friends) against the charge of "blowing a blast of revolt."[3] It is not enough to acquit him to point out in his defence that he had merely assigned to the Rulers the right of employing force, and that his intention was to "make the Word triumphant."

One of the most powerful arguments in Luther's work consisted in the full and detailed description of the Roman money traffic, Germany and other countries being exploited on the pretext that contributions were necessary for the administration of the Church. Luther had drawn his information on this subject

[1] Printed in "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 381 f.; Erl. ed., 21, p. 274 ff.

[2] Kolde, "Luther," 1, p. 256.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

from the writings of the German Neo-Humanists, and from a certain "Roman courtier" (Dr. Viccius) resident in Wittenberg.

It was, however, the promise he received of material help which spurred Luther on to give a social aspect to his theological movement and thus to ensure the support of the disaffected Knights and Humanists. Concerning Silvester von Schauenberg, he wrote to a confidant, Wenceslaus Link: "This noble man from Franconia has sent me a letter . . . with the promise of one hundred Franconian Knights for my protection, should I need them . . . Rome has written to the Prince against me, and the same has been done by an important German Court. Our German book addressed to the whole Nobility of Germany on the amelioration of the Church is now to appear; that will be a powerful challenge to Rome, for her godless arts and usurpations are therein unmasked. Farewell and pray for me."[1]

By the end of August another new book by Luther, which, like the former, is accounted by Luther's Protestant biographers as one of the "great Reformation-works," was in the press; such was the precipitancy with which his turbulent spirit drove him to deal with the vital questions of the day. The title of the new Latin publication which was at once translated into German was "Prelude to the Babylonish Captivity of the Church."[2]

He there attacks the Seven Sacraments of the Church, of which he retains only three, namely, Baptism, Penance, and the Supper, and declares that even these must first be set free from the bondage in which they are held in the Papacy, namely, from the general state of servitude in the Church; this condition had, so he opined, produced in the Church many other perverse doctrines and practices which ought to be set aside, among these being the whole matrimonial law as observed in the Papacy, and, likewise, the celibacy of the clergy.

The termination of this work shows that it was intended to incite the minds of its readers against Rome, in order to forestall the impending Ban.

This end was yet better served by the third "reforming" work "On the Freedom of a Christian Man," a popular tract

[1] Letter of July 20, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 444.

[2] Printed in "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 484 ff.; Erl. ed., "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 13 *seq.*

in Latin and German with its dangerously seductive explanation of his teaching on faith, justification and works.[1]

In this work, as a matter of fact, Luther expresses with the utmost emphasis his theological standpoint which hitherto he had kept in the background, but which was really the source of all his errors. As before this in the pulpit, so here also he derives from faith only the whole work of justification and virtue which, according to him, God alone produces in us; this he describes in language forcible, insinuating and of a character to appeal to the people; it was only necessary to have inwardly experienced the power of faith in tribulations, temptations, anxieties and struggles to understand that in it lay the true freedom of a Christian man.

This booklet has in recent times been described by a Protestant as "perhaps the most beautiful work Luther ever wrote, and an outcome of religious contemplation rather than of theological study."[2] It does, as a matter of fact, present its wrong ideas in many instances under a mystical garb, which appeals strongly to the heart, and which Luther had made his own by the study of older German models.

The new theory which, he alleged, was to free man from the burden of the Catholic doctrine of good works, he summed up in words, the effect of which upon the masses may readily be conceived: "By this faith all your sins are forgiven you, all the corruption within you is overcome, and you yourself are made righteous, true, devout and at peace; all the commandments are fulfilled, and you are set free from all things."[3] "This is Christian liberty . . . that we stand in need of no works for the attainment of piety and salvation."[4] "The Christian becomes by faith so exalted above all things that he is made spiritual lord of all; for there is nothing that can hinder his being saved."[5] By faith in Christ, man, according to Luther, has become sure of salvation; he is "assured of life for evermore, may snap his fingers at the devil, and need no longer tremble before the wrath of God."

It was inevitable that the author should attempt to vindicate himself from the charge of encouraging a false freedom. "Here we reply to all those," he says in the same booklet,[6] "who are offended at the above language, and who say: 'Well, if faith is everything and suffices to make us pious, why, then, are good works commanded? Let us be of good cheer and do nothing.'" What is Luther's answer? "No, my friend, not so. It might indeed be thus if you were altogether an interior man, and had become entirely spiritual and soulful, but this will not happen until the Day of Judgment."

[1] Printed in Latin, "Opp. Lat. var.," 4, p. 206 *seq.*; "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 39 ff. In German, "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 12 ff. Erl. ed., 27, p. 173 ff.

[2] Kolde, "Luther," 1, p. 274. [3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 23.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 25. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 27. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 29 f.

But in so far as man is of the world and a servant of sin, he continues, he must rule over his body, and consort with other men; "here works make their appearance; idleness is bad; the body must be disciplined in moderation and exercised by fasting, watching and labour, that it may be obedient and conformable to faith and inwardness, and may not hinder and resist as its nature is when it is not controlled." "But," he immediately adds this limitation to his allusion to works, "such works must not be done in the belief that thereby a man becomes pious in God's sight"; for piety before God consists in faith alone, and it is only "because the soul is made pure by faith and loves God, that it desires all things to be pure, first of all its own body, and wishes every man likewise to love and praise God."

In spite of all reservations it is very doubtful whether the work "On the Freedom of a Christian Man" was capable of improving the many who joined Luther's standard in order to avail themselves of the new freedom in its secular sense. "By faith" man became, so Luther had told them, pure and free and "lord of all." They might reply, and as a matter of fact later on they did: Why then impose the duty of works, especially if the interior man has, according to his own judgment, become strong and sufficiently independent? Such was actually the argument of the fanatics. They added, "to become altogether spiritual and interior," is in any case impossible, moreover, as, according to the new teaching, works spring spontaneously from the state of one who is justified, why then speak of a duty of performing good works, or why impose an obligation to do this or that particular good work here and now? It is better and easier for us to stimulate the spirit and the interior life of faith in the soul merely in a general way and in accordance with the new ideal.

As a matter of fact, experience soon showed that where the traditional Christian motives for good works (reparation for sin, the acquiring of merit with the assistance of God's grace, etc.) were given up, the practice of good works suffered.

There is, however, no doubt that there were some on whom the booklet, with its heartfelt and moving exhortation to communion with Christ, did not fail to make a deep impression, more particularly in view of the formalism which then prevailed.

"Where the heart thus hears the voice of Christ," says Luther with a simple, popular eloquence which recalls that of the best

old German authors, "it must needs become glad, receive the deepest comfort and be filled with sweetness towards Christ, loving Him and ever after troubling nothing about laws and works. For who can harm such a heart, or cause it alarm? Should sin or death befall, it merely recollects that Christ's righteousness is its own, and then, as we have said, sin disappears before faith in the Righteousness of Christ; with the Apostle it learns to defy death and sin, and to say: O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin, but thanks be to God Who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, so that death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. xv. 54 ff.).[1]

Pious phrases, such as these, which are of frequent occurrence, demanded a stable theological foundation in order to produce any lasting effects. In Luther's case there was, however, no such foundation, and hence they are merely deceptive. The words quoted, as a matter of fact, detract somewhat from the grand thought of St. Paul, since the victory over sin and death of which he speaks refers, not to the present life of the Faithful, but to the glorious resurrection. The Apostle does, however, refer to our present life in the earnest exhortation with which he concludes (1 Cor. xv. 58): "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Protestants frequently consider it very much to Luther's credit that he insisted with so much force and feeling in his work "On the Freedom of a Christian Man" upon the dignity which faith and a state of grace impart to every calling, even to the most commonplace; his words, so they say, demonstrate that life in the world, and even the humblest vocation, when illumined by religion, has in it something of the infinite. This, however, had already been impressed upon the people, and far more correctly, in numerous instructions and sermons dating from mediæval times, though, agreeably with the teaching of the Gospel, the path of the Evangelical Counsels, and still more the Apostolic and priestly vocation, was accounted higher than the ordinary secular calling. A high Protestant authority, of many of whose utterances we can scarcely approve, remarks: "It is usual to consider this work of Luther's as the Magna Charta of Protestant liberty, and of the Protestant ideal of a worldly calling in contradistinction to Catholic asceticism and renunciation of the world. My opinion is that this view is a misapprehension of Luther's work."[2]

It was this booklet, "On the Freedom of a Christian Man," that the author had the temerity to send to Pope Leo X, with an accompanying letter (see above, p. 18), in which he professed to lay the whole matter in the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff, though in the work itself he denied all the Papal prerogatives. In the latter denial Luther was only logical, for if the foundation

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed. 7, p. 29.

[2] Köhler, "Luther und die Kirchengesch," 1, p. 42.

of the whole of the hierarchy be upset, what then remains of the position of the Pope ?

To appreciate the effects of the three works just mentioned it may be worth our while to examine more closely two characteristics which there appear in singular juxtaposition. One is the deeply religious tone which, as we said, is so noteworthy in Luther's book "On the Freedom of a Christian Man." The other is an unmistakable tendency to dissolve all religion based on authority.

Luther, as we said before, positively refused to have anything to do with a religion of merely human character ; yet, if we only draw the necessary conclusions from certain propositions which he sets up, we find that he is not very far removed from such a religion ; he is, all unawares, on the high road to the destruction of all authority in matters of faith. This fact makes the depth of religious feeling evinced by the author appear all the more strange to the experienced reader.[1]

Some examples will make our meaning clearer.

In the work addressed to the Christian nobility, Luther confers on every one of the Faithful the fullest right of private judgment as regards both doctrines and doctors, and limits it by no authority save the Word of God as explained by the Christian himself.

"If we all are priests"—a fact already proved, so he says—"how then shall we not have the right to discriminate and judge what is right or wrong in faith ? What otherwise becomes of the saying of Paul in 1 Corinthians ii. [15], 'The spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man,' and again, 'Having all the same spirit of faith,' 2 Corinthians iv. [13] ? How then should we not perceive, just as well as an unbelieving Pope, what is in agreement with faith and what not ? These and many other passages are intended to give us courage and make us free, so that we may not be frightened away from the spirit of liberty, as Paul calls it (2 Cor. iii. [17]), by the fictions of the Popes, but rather judge freely, according to our understanding of the Scriptures, of all things that they do or leave undone, and force them to follow what is better and not their own reason."[2]

[1] The true character of such utterances of Luther can be best judged from the results they produced. "The effect not merely of the radical tendencies, but of Luther's sermons, was chiefly to make the people believe that the freedom of a Christian was to be found in the utmost contempt for all law, whether human or Divine," G. Krüger, "Phil. Melanchthon, eine Charakterskizze," 1906, p. 14.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 412 ; Erl. ed., 21, p. 288.

"A little man," he had said already, "may have a right comprehension; why then should we not follow him?" and, with an unmistakable allusion to himself, he adds: surely more trust is to be placed in one "who has Scripture on his side."[1]

Such assertions, as a matter of fact, destroy all the claims made by the visible Church to submission to her teaching. Further, they proclaim the principle of the fullest independence of the Christian in matters of faith; nothing but private judgment and personal inspiration can decide. Luther failed to see that, logically, every barrier must give way before this principle of liberty, and that Holy Scripture itself loses its power of resistance, subjectivism first invading its interpretation and then, in the hands of the extremer sort of critics, questioning its value and divine origin. The inner consequences of Luther's doctrine on freedom and autonomy have been clearly pointed out even by some of the more advanced Protestant theologians. Adolf Harnack, for instance, recently expressed the truth neatly when he said that "Kant and Fichte were both of them hidden behind Luther."[2]

The second work "On the Babylonish Captivity," with its sceptical tendency, of which, however, Luther was in great part unconscious, also vindicates this opinion.

The very arbitrariness with which the author questions facts of faith or usages dating from the earliest ages of the Church, must naturally have awakened in such of his readers as were already predisposed a spirit of criticism which bore a startling resemblance to the spirit of revolt. Here again, in one passage, Luther comes to the question of the right of placing private judgment in matters of religion above all authority. He here teaches that there exists in the assembly of the Faithful, and through the illumination of the Divine Spirit, a certain "interior sense for judging concerning doctrine, a sense, which, though it cannot be demonstrated, is nevertheless absolutely certain." He describes faith, as it comes into being in every individual Christian soul, "as the result of a certitude directly inspired of God, a certitude of which he himself is conscious."[3]

What this private judgment of each individual would lead to in Holy Scripture, Luther shows by his own example in this very work; he already makes a distinction based on the "interior sense" between the various books of the Bible, i.e. those stamped with the true Apostolic Spirit, and, for instance, the less trustworthy Epistle of St. James, of which the teaching contradicts his own. Köstlin, with a certain amount of reserve, admits: "This he gives us to understand, agreeably with his principles

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., p. 411 (287).

[2] "Preussische Jahrbücher," 1909, Hft. 1, p. 35. In his review of Denifle-Weiss, vol. ii., P. Albert Weiss, in many passages, describes the consequences alluded to above.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 561. "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 102. The summary is from Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 349.

and experience ; it is not our affair to prove that it is tenable or to vindicate it."[1]

Luther says at the end of the passage in question : "Of this question more elsewhere." As a matter of fact, however, he never did treat of it fully and in detail, although it concerned the fundamentals of religion ; for this omission he certainly had reasons of his own.

A certain radicalism is perceptible in the work "On the Babylonish Captivity," even with regard to social matters. Luther lays it down : "I say that no Pope or Bishop or any other man has a right to impose even one syllable upon a Christian man, except with his consent ; any other course is pure tyranny."[2] It is true that ostensibly he is only assailing the tyranny of ecclesiastical laws, yet, even so, he exceeds all reasonable limits.

With regard to marriage, the foundation of society, so unguarded is he, that, besides destroying its sacramental character, he brushes aside the ecclesiastical impediments of marriage as mere man-made inventions, and, speaking of divorce based on these laws, he declares that to him bigamy is preferable.[3] When a marriage is dissolved on account of adultery, he thinks remarriage allowable to the innocent party. He also expresses the fervent wish that the words of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians vii. 15, according to which the Christian man or woman deserted by an infidel spouse is thereby set free from the marriage tie, should also apply to the marriages of Christians where the one party has maliciously deserted the other ; in such a case, the offending party is no better than an infidel. Regarding the impediment of impotence on the man's part, he conceives the idea[4] that the

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 350. "With the nature and extent of the Christian liberty which he [here] claimed he might have shocked even libertines. Nor did he shrink from advocating it elsewhere in the same work." *Ibid.*, p. 345.

[2] "*Dico itaque : Neque papa neque episcopus neque ullus hominum habet ius unius syllabæ constituendæ super christianum hominem, nisi id fiat eiusdem consensu ; quidquid aliter fit, tyrannico spiritu fit*" (p. 536 [68]). Cp. p. 554 [93], concerning the superfluousness of laws : "*Hoc scio, nullam rempublicam legibus feliciter administrari. . . . Quod si adsit eruditio divina cum prudentia naturali, plane superfluum et noxium est scriptas leges habere ; super omnia autem caritas nullis prorsus legibus indiget*" (p. 555 [94]). "*Christianis per Christum libertas donata est super omnes leges hominum.*" On p. 558 [98], with regard to the alleged corruption of the marriage law : "*Ut nulla remedii spes sit, nisi, revocato libertatis evangelio, secundum ipsum, exstinctis semel omnibus omnium hominum legibus, omnia iudicemus et regamus. Amen.*" This latter declaration of war, and other things too, are not found in the Jena and Wittenberg editions. In all these utterances we see the excessive zeal of a theorist devoid of experience whose eyes are blind to the consequences. Many, indeed, are those who in the course of history have been equally precipitate in pronouncing on questions of moment, regardless of the number of their readers.

[3] p. 555 [100] : "*Digamiam malim quam divortium, sed an liceat, ipse non audeo definire.*"

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 348.

wife might, without any decision of the court, "live secretly with her husband's brother, or with some other man."[1] In the later editions of Luther's works this statement, as well as that concerning bigamy, has been suppressed.

Luther, so he says, is loath to decide anything. But neither are popes or bishops to give decisions! "If, however," says Luther, "two well-instructed and worthy men were to agree in Christ's name, and speak according to the spirit of Christ, then I would prefer their judgment before all the Councils, which are now only looked up to on account of the number and outward reputation of the people there assembled, no regard being paid to their learning and holiness."[2] Apart from other objections, the stipulation concerning the "Spirit of Christ," here made by the mystic, renders his plan illusory, for who is to determine that the "Spirit of Christ" is present in the judgment of the two "well-instructed men"? Luther seems to assume that this determination is an easy matter. First and foremost, who is to decide whether these men are really well-instructed? There were many whose opinion differed from Luther's, and who thought that this and such-like demands, made in his tract "On the Babylonish Captivity," opened the door to a real confusion of Babel.

Neither can the work "On the Freedom of a Christian Man" be absolved from a certain dangerous radicalism. A false spirit of liberty in the domain of faith breathes through it. The faith which is here extolled is not faith in the olden and true meaning of the word, namely the submission of reason to what God has revealed and proposes for belief through the authority He Himself instituted, but faith in the Lutheran sense, i.e. personal trust in Christ and in the salvation He offers. Faith in the whole supernatural body of Christian truth comes here so little into account that it is reduced to the mere assurance of salvation. All that we are told is that the Christian is "free and has power over all" by a simple appropriation of the merits of Christ; he is purified by the mere acceptance of the merciful love revealed in Christ; "this faith suffices him," and through it he enjoys all the riches of God. And this so-called faith is mainly a matter of feeling; a man must learn to "taste the true spirit of interior trials," just as the author himself, so he says, "in his great temptations had been permitted to taste a few drops of faith."[3]

[1] p. 558 [99]: "*Consulam, ut cum consensu viri—cum iam non sit maritus, sed simplex et solutus cohabitator—misceatur alteri vel fratri mariti, occulto tamen matrimonio, et proles imputetur putativo, ut dicunt, patri.*" Cp. his disgusting language regarding the ecclesiastical impediments of marriage, p. 554, [93]: "*Quid vendunt [Romanenses]? Vulvas et veretra. Merx scilicet dignissima mercatoribus istis, præ avaritia et impietate plus quam sordidissimis et obscoenissimis . . . ut in ecclesia Dei loco sancto [sit] abominatio ista, quæ venderet hominibus publice utriusque sexus pudibunda, seu, ut scriptura vocat, ignominias et turpitudines, quas tamen antea per vim legum suarum rapuissent.*"

[2] p. 560 [101].

[3] Cp. the Latin edition, "Opp. Lat. var.," 4, p. 206 *seq.* The summary is from Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 358 ff.

Faith is thus not only robbed of its true meaning and made into a mere personal assurance, but the assurance appears as something really not so easy of attainment, since it is only to be arrived at by treading the difficult path of spiritual suffering.

Luther thereby strikes a blow at one of the most vital points of positive religion, viz. the idea of faith.

The author, in this same work,[1] again reminds us that by faith all are priests, and therefore have the right "to instruct Christians concerning the faith and the freedom of believers"; for the preservation of order, however, all cannot teach, and therefore some are chosen from amongst the rest for this purpose. It is plain how, by this means, a door was opened to the introduction of diversity of doctrine and the ruin of the treasure of revelation.

The religious tone which Luther assumed in the work "On the Freedom of a Christian Man," and his earnestness and feeling, made his readers more ready to overlook the perils for real religion which it involved. This consideration brings us to the other characteristic, viz. the pietism which, as stated above, is so strangely combined in the three works with intense radicalism.

The religious feeling which pervades every page of the "Freedom of a Christian Man" is, if anything, overdone. In what Luther there says we see the outpourings of one whose religious views are quite peculiar, and who is bent on bringing the Christian people to see things in the same light as he does; deeply imbued as he is with his idea of salvation by faith alone, and full of bitterness against the alleged disfiguring of the Church's life by meritorious works, he depicts his own conception of religion in vivid and attractive colours, and in the finest language of the mystics. It is easy to understand how so many Protestant writers have been fascinated by these pages, indeed, the best ascetic writers might well envy him certain of the passages in which he speaks of the person of Christ and of communion with Him. Nevertheless, a fault which runs through the whole work is, as already explained, his tendency to narrow the horizon of religious thought and feeling by making the end of everything to consist in the mere awakening of trust in Christ as our Saviour. Ultimately, religion to him means no more than this confidence; he is even anxious to exclude so well-founded and fruitful a spiritual exercise as compassion with the sufferings of our crucified Redeemer, actually calling it

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 58. "Opp. Lat. var.," 4, 233.

"childish and effeminate stupidity."[1] How much more profound and fruitful was the religious sentiment of the genuine mystics of the Church, whom the contemplation of the sufferings of Christ furnished with the most beautiful and touching subject of meditation, and who knew how to find a source of edification in all the truths of faith, and not only in that of the forgiveness of sins. Writers such as they, described to their pious readers in far greater detail the person of Christ, the honour given by Him to God and the virtues He had inculcated.

The booklet "To the Nobility," likewise, particularly in the Preface, throws a strange sidelight on the pietism of the so-called great Reformation works.

Here, in his exordium to the three tracts, the author seeks to win over the minds of the piously disposed. The most earnest reformer of the Church could not set himself to the task with greater fear, greater diffidence and humility than he. Luther, as he assures his readers, is obliged "to cry and call aloud like a poor man that God may inspire someone to stretch out a helping hand to the unfortunate nation." He declares that such a task "must not be undertaken by one who trusts in his power and wisdom, for God will not allow a good work to be commenced in trust in our own might and ability." "The work must be undertaken in humble confidence in God, His help being sought in earnest prayer, and with nothing else in view but the misery and misfortune of unhappy Christendom, even though the people have brought it on themselves. . . . Therefore let us act wisely and in the fear of God. The greater the strength employed, the greater the misfortune, unless all is done in the fear of God and in humility."[2]

Further on, even in his most violent attacks, the author is ever insisting that it is only a question of the honour of Christ: "it is the power of the devil and of End-Christ [Antichrist] that hinders what would be for the reform of Christendom: therefore let us beware, and resist it even at the cost of our life and all we have. . . . Let us hold fast to this: Christian strength can do nothing against Christ, as St Paul says (2 Cor. xiii. 8). We can do nothing against Christ, but only for Him."[3]

In his concluding words, convinced of his higher mission, he

[1] "Opp. Lat. var," 4, 233. Some preach, "*Ut affectus humanos moveant ad condolendum Christo ad indignandum Iudæis et id genus alia puerilia et muliebria deliramenta.*" One must preach, "*eo fine, quo fides in eum promoveatur*"; this preaching is in agreement with the teaching according to which in Christ, "*omnium domini sumus, et quidquid egerimus, coram Deo placitum et acceptum esse confidimus.*"

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 405; Erl. ed., 21, p. 278 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 414 [291].

declares that he was "compelled" to come forward. "God has forced me by them [my adversaries] to open my mouth still further, and, because they are cowards, to preach at them, bark at them, roar at them and write against them. . . . Though I know that my cause is good, yet it must needs be condemned on earth and be justified only by Christ in heaven."[1] When a mission is Divine, then the world must oppose it.—One wonders whether everything that meets with disapproval must therefore be accounted Divine.

It is the persuasion of his higher mission that explains the religious touch so noticeable in these three writings. The power of faith there expressed refers, however, principally to his own doctrine and his own struggles. If we take the actual facts into account, it is impossible to look on these manifestations of religion as mere hypocrisy. The pietism we find in the tract "To the German Nobility" is indeed overdone, and of a very peculiar character, yet the writer meant it as seriously as he did the blame he metes out to the abuses of his age.

We still have to consider the religious side of the work "On the Babylonish Captivity." Originally written in Latin, and intended not so much for the people as for the learned, this tract, even in the later German version, is not clad in the same popular religious dress as the other two. Like the others, nevertheless, it was designed as a weapon to serve in the struggle for a religious renewal, especially in the matter of the Sacraments. Among other of its statements, which are characteristic of the direction of Luther's mind, is the odd-sounding request at the very commencement: "If my adversaries are worthy of being led back by Christ to a more reasonable conception of things, then I beg that in His Mercy He may do so. Are they not worthy, then I pray that they may not cease to write their books against me, and that the enemies of truth may deserve to read no others."[2] His conclusion is: He commits his book with joy to the hands of all the pious, i.e. of those who wish to understand aright the sense of Holy Scripture and the true use of the Sacraments.[3] He further declares in an obstinate and mocking manner his intention of ever holding fast to his own opinion. His more enlightened contemporaries saw with anxiety how every page of his work teemed with signs of self-deception and blind prejudice, and of a violent determination to overthrow religious views which had held the field for ages. To those who cared to reflect, Luther's religiousness appeared in the light of a religious downfall, and as the chaotic manifestation of a desire to demolish all those venerable traditions which encumbered the way of the spirit of revolt.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 468 f. [360 f.].
[2] *Ibid.*, 500 f. "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 20.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 173 f. [=118].

4. Luther's Followers. Two Types of His Cultured Partisans: Willibald Pirkheimer and Albert Dürer

Owing to the huge and rapid circulation of the three "Reformation works," the number of Luther's followers among all classes increased with prodigious speed.

The spirit of the nation was roused by his bold words, the like of which had never before been heard.

Too many of those whose Catholicism was largely a matter of form were seduced by the new spirit that was abroad, and by the "liberty of the Gospel," before they rightly saw their danger. The fascination of the promised freedom was even increased by Luther's earnest exhortations to commence a general reformation, to cultivate the inner man, and to assert the independence of the German against immoral Italians, the extortioners of the Curia and the spiritual tyranny of the Pope. Even better minds, men who despised the masses and their vulgar agitation, were powerfully attracted. At no other time, save possibly at the French Revolution, was mankind more profoundly stirred by the force of untried ideas, which with suggestive power suddenly invaded every rank of society. Scholars, writers, artists, countless men who had heard nothing of Luther that was not to his advantage, and who, from lack of theological knowledge, were unable fully to appreciate the spirit of his writings, were carried away by the man who so courageously attacked the crying abuses which they themselves had long bewailed.

In explaining this universal commotion we cannot lay too great stress upon a factor which also played a part in it, viz. the comparative ignorance of most people regarding Luther, his antecedents and his aims. Eminent men, and his own contemporaries, who allowed themselves to be borne away by the current, were incredibly ignorant of Luther as he is now known to history. They knew practically nothing of the whole arsenal of letters, tracts and reports which to-day lie open before us and are being read, compared and annotated by industrious scholars. It is difficult for us at the present day to imagine the condition of ignorance in which even cultured men were, in the sixteenth century, regarding the Lutheran movement, especially at its inception.

To show the seduction and fascination exercised by

Luther's writings even on eminent men, we may take two famous Nurembergers, Willibald Pirkheimer and Albert Dürer.

Willibald Pirkheimer, a Senator of Nuremberg and Imperial Councillor, was one of the most respected and cultured Humanists of his day. He edited or translated many patristic works. After taking a too active part in the Reuchlin controversy against the theologians of Cologne, owing to his zeal for a reformed method of studies, he put himself on Luther's side, again out of enthusiasm for reform, and under the impression that he had found in his doctrine a more profound conception of religion. He received Luther as his guest when he passed through Nuremberg on his return journey from Augsburg, after his appearance before Cardinal Cajetan. In a letter to Emser he declared that the learned men of Wittenberg had earned undying fame by having been, after so many centuries, the first to open their eyes, and to distinguish between the true and the false, and to banish from Christian theology a bad philosophy.[1] Eck even inserted his name in the Bull of Excommunication which he published, though Pirkheimer was absolved on appealing to Pope Leo X. He wrote, in Luther's favour, a letter to Hadrian VI which, however, was perhaps never despatched, in which he calls him "a good and learned man." The entire blame for the quarrel was thrust by this disputatious and peculiar man on Eck and the Dominicans.

In later years, however, he withdrew more and more from the Lutheran standpoint, chiefly, as it would appear, because he perceived the unbridled nature of the Reformers' views and the bad moral and social effects of the innovations. He died in 1530 at peace with the Catholic Church.

"I had hoped at the commencement," he wrote already in 1527 to Zasius in Freiburg, "that we might have obtained a certain degree of liberty, but of a purely spiritual character. Now, however, as we see with our own eyes, everything is perverted to the lust of the flesh, so that the last state is far worse than the first."[2] He admitted his definite turning away from Lutheranism in a letter to Kilian Leib, Prior of the Rebdorf Monastery (1529), in which he at the same time relates the reason of his previous enthusiasm: "I hoped that [by Luther's enterprise] the countless abuses would be remedied, but I found

[1] See Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1, p. 162.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

myself greatly deceived; for, before the former errors had been expelled, others, much more intolerable, and compared to which the earlier were mere child's play, forced themselves in. I therefore began to withdraw myself gradually, and the more attentively I considered everything the more clearly I recognised the cunning of the old serpent."[1]

His letter to his friend Tschertte in Vienna (1530) also contains a "loud lamentation and outburst of anger against Luther's work." We can see that he has entirely broken with it.[2] In this letter he says: "I admit that at first I too was a good Lutheran, like our departed Albert [Dürer]. We hoped thereby to better the Roman knavery and the roguery of the monks and parsons." But the contrary was the result; those of the new faith were even worse than those whom they were to reform. Members of the Council had also hoped for a general improvement of morals, but had found themselves shamefully deceived. He knows for certain—a valuable admission in view of the unhistorical idea of some Catholics that Luther's partisans were all frivolous men—that "many pious and honourable men" lent a willing ear to his teaching: "hearing beautiful things said of faith and the holy Gospel, they fancy all is real gold that glitters, whereas it is hardly brass."[3]

Another statement against Luther, made by this same scholar in 1528, is still stronger: "Formerly almost all men applauded at the sound of Luther's name, but now nearly all are seized with disgust on hearing it . . . and not without cause, for apart from his audacity, impudence, arrogance and slanderous tongue he is also guilty of lying to such an extent that he cannot refrain from any untruth; what he asserts to-day he does not scruple to deny to-morrow; he is instability itself."[4]

[1] See Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1^2, p. 586 f. Cp. 169 ff., 1, p. xv. Also J. Schlecht, "K. Leib's Briefwechsel und Diarien," Münster, 1909, p. 12.

[2] Friedr. Roth, "Wilh. Pirkheimer," Halle, 1887 (Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgesch., v. 4). The author says, Pirkheimer's final opinion on Lutheranism is summed up in the words: "God keep all pious men, countries and peoples from such teaching, for where it is there is no peace, quiet or unity." Though Pirkheimer confessed "with energy that he was once more a member of the olden Catholic Church," he nevertheless remained as much a Humanist as a Catholic as he had been as a Protestant. Yet that he still saw some good in Luther's cause is clear from what Melanchthon writes of him as late as April, 1530. "*Fuimus apud Pirchamerum hodie, ego et Ionas, qui de te et causa honorifice sentit.*" To Luther, April 28, 1530, "Briefwechsel Luthers," 7, p. 310. P. Drews, "Pirkheimers Stellung zur Reformation," Leipzig, 1887, is more sceptical regarding his return to Catholicism, though he brings forward no definite proofs to the contrary. He himself mentions how Cochlæus, in a letter of March 10, 1529, invited Pirkheimer ("Pirkheimer Opp.," ed. Goldast, p. 396) to write a satire in verse on Luther after the model of his own "*Lutherus scepticeps.*"

[3] Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 168.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 514.

We see also from the example of Albert Dürer of Nuremberg, who is rightly accounted one of the greatest masters of Art, how overwhelming an influence the stormy energy, the calls for reform and the religious tone of Luther's writings could exert on the susceptible minds of the day. Of a lively temper,[1] full of imagination and religious idealism, as his sixteen wonderful illustrations to the Apocalypse proved in 1498, he, like his Nuremberg friend Willibald Pirkheimer, gave himself up from the very first to the influence of the Lutheran writings, with which to a certain extent he was in sympathy. In his enthusiasm for freedom he considered that Christianity was too much fettered by oppressive rules of human invention, and was profoundly troubled by the desecration of holy things introduced in many regions by the greed and avarice of a worldly-minded clergy.

In 1520 he wrote to Spalatin: "God grant that I may meet with Dr. Martinus Luther, for then I will make a careful sketch of him and engrave it in copper, so that the memory of the Christian man may long be preserved, for he has helped me out of much anxiety." He believed that light had been brought to him by means of Luther's spiritual teaching, and a little further on he calls him "a man enlightened by the Holy Ghost and one who has the Spirit of God"; these words, which came from the depths of his soul, are an echo of Luther's writings. Altogether prepossessed in Luther's favour, though he never formally abandoned the Church, he wrote in his Diary, on May 17, 1521; "The Papacy resists the liberty of Christ by its great burden of human commandments, and in shameful fashion sucks our blood and robs us of our sweat for the benefit of idle and immoral folk, while those who are sick are parched with thirst and left to die of hunger."

Being at that time somewhat anxious with regard to his material position, he had gone to Holland, and had heard of Luther's supposed capture and disappearance after the Diet of Worms. In the same Memorandum, therefore, he summons Erasmus to undertake a reform of the Church: "O Erasmus Roderdamus, why hangest thou back? Listen, O Christian knight, ride forth by the side of the Lord Christ and defend the cause of truth. . . . Then the gates of Hell, the Roman See, shall, as Christ says, not prevail against thee . . . for God is on the side of the holy Christian Churches." And he adds in Apocalyptic tone: "Await the completing of the number of those who have been slain innocently, and then I will judge."[2] Yet even on this

[1] His father Albert came from Eptas in Hungary; he was a goldsmith.

[2] A. Dürer's "Schriftlicher Nachlass," ed. Lange and Fuchse, 1893, p. 161 ff.

journey through the Netherlands, Dürer showed interest in the manifestations of Catholic life, attended the Catholic services, and, with his wife, duly made his Easter Confession.

Two thoughts, the oppression of the Faithful by man-made commandments and the unjust extortion of their money, held him under the spell of Luther's writings with their promise of deliverance.

"O God, if Luther is dead who will in future expound the Holy Gospel to us so clearly? What would he not have written for us in ten or twenty years!" "Never," he says, "has anyone written more clearly during the last 140 years [i.e. since the death of Wiclif in 1381], never has God given to anyone so evangelical a spirit." So transparent is his teaching, that "everyone who reads Dr. Martin Luther's books sees that it is the Gospel which he upholds. Hence they must be held sacred and not be burnt."[1]

The man who wrote this was clearly better able to wield the pencil or brush than to pass theological judgment on the questions under discussion. Dürer was already among the most famous men of the day. Led astray by the praise of the Humanists, he, and other similarly privileged minds, easily exceeded the limits of their calling, abetted as they were by the evil tendency to individualism and personal independence prevalent among the best men of the day.

On his return to Nuremberg in the autumn of 1521 he lived entirely for his art and remote from all else, clinging to the opinions he had already embraced, or at least suspending his judgment. How greatly the real or imaginary abuses in Catholic practice were capable of exciting him, especially where avarice appeared to play a part, is proved by his indignant inscription in 1523 to an Ostendorfer woodcut, representing the veneration of a picture of our Lady at Ratisbon: "This spectre has risen up against Holy Scripture at Regenspurg . . . out of greed of gain"; his wish is that Mary should be rightly venerated "in Christ." In 1526 he presented his picture of the four Apostles, now the ornament of the Munich Pinacothek, to the Nuremberg bench of magistrates who had just established Protestantism in the city, exhorting them "to accept no human inventions in place of the Word of God, for God will not allow His Word to be either added to or detracted from." The "warnings," in the form of texts, afterwards

[1] A Dürer's "Schriftlicher Nachlass," ed. Lange and Fuchse, 1893, p. 161 ff.

removed, which he placed in the mouths of Peter, John, Paul and Mark in his celebrated picture, also refer to religious seducers and false prophets, more particularly those who seize on the possessions of the poor through avarice and greed. We can hardly do otherwise than apply these texts to the abuses which met with his disapproval, and alleged false teaching of the Catholic Church. It is plain that the Elector Maximilian I of Bavaria understood them in this sense when he ordered their removal. This view is also supported by Dürer's letter in 1524 to Nicholas Kratzer, in which he says : "We are derided as heretics," but this must be endured. At a later date Pirkheimer seems to have regarded him as merely "on the way to becoming a Lutheran" (p. 40). It cannot be affirmed with certainty that, when he died suddenly at Nuremberg, on April 6, 1528, he was either entirely convinced of the justice of Luther's cause or had reverted to Catholicism.[1] At any rate, his art grew up on the soil of the Church.

Luther himself spoke of him after his death, on the strength of the reports received, and, perhaps, also from a desire to reckon him amongst his followers, in a letter to the Nuremberg Humanist Eobanus Hessus, as "the best of men," and one to be congratulated "for that Christ allowed him to die so happily after such preparation" ("*tam instructum et beato fine*"), sparing him the sight of the evil days to come. "Therefore may he rest in peace with his fathers, Amen."[2] Melanchthon says a few words of regret on the death of the great artist, but from them nothing definite can be gathered. Venatorius, the Lutheran preacher at Nuremberg, preached his panegyric.[3] In his letter to Tschertte, in 1530, on the other hand, Pirkheimer counts him, like himself, among those who were at first good Lutherans, but were afterwards disappointed in their hopes. "The close friendship which united Dürer to this passionate and conceited scholar, who could not brook the slightest contradiction, is, in fact, a proof which we must not undervalue, of a certain affinity in their

[1] On his adhesion to Protestantism, see M. Zucker, "Albrecht Dürer," 1900, chap. xvi., and Lange in the "Grenzbote," vol. lv. 1, with reasons which are, however, open to criticism. E. Heidrich ("Dürer und die Reformation," 1909) makes Dürer die a Lutheran. For his final profession of Catholicism see more particularly Ant. Weber, "Albrecht Dürer," 3rd ed., 1903. Cp. "Hochland," 3, 2, 1906, p. 206 ff. W. Köhler remarks in the "Theol. Jahresbericht," 1908, vol. xxviii., p. 244 : "Dürer was more a follower of Erasmus than a Lutheran." See also G. Stuhlfauth in the "Deutsch-evangel. Blätter," 1907, p. 835 ff., and "Histor. Jahrb.," 1910, p. 456 ff.

[2] April or May, 1528, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 255.

[3] Enders, *ibid.*, p. 257, n. 3.

views with regard to the cardinal question of faith and religious belief."[1] It is not impossible that Dürer, like Pirkheimer, began to have doubts, and withdrew at last the open support he had previously given the Reformers.

The spiritual experiences of Pirkheimer and Dürer help to bring before our eyes typical instances of the false paths followed by many of their contemporaries and the struggles through which they went.

[1] Hagelstange, in "Hochland," 1906, p. 314.

CHAPTER XII

EXCOMMUNICATION AND OUTLAWRY
SPIRITUAL BAPTISM IN THE WARTBURG

1. The Trial. The Excommunication (1520) and its Consequences

On June 15, 1520, Leo X promulgated the Bull condemning forty-one Propositions of Luther's teaching, and threatening the person of their author with excommunication.[1]

The Bull was the result of a formal suit instituted at Rome on the details of which light has been thrown in recent times by Karl Müller, Aloys Schulte and Paul Kalkoff.[2]

The trial had taken a long time, much too long considering the state of things in Germany ; this delay was in reality due to political causes, to the Pope's regard for the Elector of Saxony, the approaching Imperial Election and to the procrastination of the German Prince-Bishops. Even before Dr. Johann Eck proceeded to Rome to promote the case the negotiations had been resumed in the Papal Consistories at the instance of the Italian party. The first Consistory was held on January 9, 1520.

After this, from February to the middle of March, the matter was in the hands of a commission of theologians who

[1] "Bulla contra errores M. Lutheri," Romæ, 1520. Printed also in "Bullar. Rom.," ed. Taurin., 5, p. 748 *seq.*, and in Raynaldus, "Annales," a. 1520, n. 51 ; and with a bitter commentary by Luther, in "Opp. Lat. var.," 4, p. 264 *seq.*

[2] K. Müller, in "Zeitschr. für Kirchengesch.," 24, 1903, p. 46 ff. A. Schulte, in "Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken," 6, 1903, p. 32 ff., 174 ff. P. Kalkoff, "Zu Luthers römischem Prozess," in "Zeitschr. für Kirchengesch.," 31, 1910, p. 372 ff ; 32, 1911, p. 1 ff. ; p. 199 ff., 408 ff., 572 ff. ; 33, 1912, p. 1 ff. He deals fully with the part taken by the Dominicans in the Indulgence controversy. Kalkoff's researches have since been published apart ("Zu Luthers römischem Prozess," Gotha, 1912). A good general view of the question in Pastor, "Hist. of the Popes," Engl. Trans., 7, p. 361 ff.

were to prepare the decision. A still more select commission, presided over by the Pope in person, then undertook the drafting of the Bull with the forty-one Propositions of Luther which were to be condemned. Upon the termination of their work, in the end of April, it was submitted to the Cardinals for their decision; four more Consistories, held in May and June, were, however, necessary before the matter was finally settled. Certain differences of opinion arose as to the question whether the forty-one Propositions were, as Cardinal Cajetan proposed, to be separately stigmatised as heretical, false, scandalous, etc., or whether, as had been done in the case of the Propositions of Wiclif and Hus at Constance, they should be rejected in the lump without any more definite characterisation. The latter opinion prevailed. In the last Consistory of June 1 the Pope decided on the publication of the Bull in this shape, and by June 15 it was complete.

Two Cardinals, Pietro Accolti (Anconitanus) and Thomas de Vio (Cajetanus), had all along been busy with the case. The moving spirit was, however, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici.[1] Everything points to "the matter having been treated as a very grave one."[2]

Legally the case was based on the notoriety of Luther's doctrines, he having proposed and defended them at the Disputation of Leipzig, according to the sworn evidence of the notaries-public. The Louvain theologians and Eck had their share in selecting and denouncing the Theses. It would seem that during the trial Eck submitted the official printed minutes of the Leipzig Disputation in order to prove that the errors were really expressed in Luther's own words.

This utilisation of the Leipzig Disputation was justified, as it rendered nugatory Luther's appeal to a General Council. At the Disputation in question he had denied the authority even of Œcumenical Assemblies.

Eck's efforts were of assistance in elucidating and pressing on the matter. But we may gather how incorrectly the question was regarded in Rome by many, who, it is true, had little

[1] P. Kalkoff, "Forschungen," etc., p. 133.

[2] Schulte, "Quellen und Forschungen," see above p. 45, n. 2, p. 35. The statement of K. Müller that from the very outset there had been a difficulty in proving Luther's writing, rests, as Schulte shows (p. 43), merely on a misapprehended passage in one of the letters of the Venetian Orator at Rome.

to do with it, from the fact that, even on May 21, persons were to be found holding the opinion that the publication of a solemn Bull would tend to injure the cause of the Church rather than to advance it, and that the scandal in Germany would only become greater if it were apparent that so much importance was attached to Luther's errors.[1]

In the final sentence pronounced by the Pope, i.e. in the Bull commencing with the words: *Exsurge Domine*, the forty-one Propositions are condemned *in globo* as "heretical or false, scandalous, offensive to pious ears, insulting, ensnaring and contrary to Catholic truth."[2] A series of Luther's principal doctrines on human inability for good, on Faith, Justification and Grace, on the Sacraments, the Hierarchy and Purgatory were there condemned.

The Papal sentence did not proceed against Luther's person with the severity which, in accordance with Canon Law, his fiercest adversaries perhaps anticipated. Even the errors mentioned as occurring in his writings are designated only in the body of the Bull, and with much circumlocution. The only penalty directly imposed on him in the meantime was the prohibition to preach. The Bull declares that legally, as his case then stood, he might have been excommunicated without further question, particularly on account of his appeal to a General Council, to which the Constitutions of Pius II and Julius II had attached the penalties of heresy. Instead of this he is, for the present, merely threatened with excommunication, and is placed under the obligation, within sixty days (i.e. after a triple summons repeated at intervals of twenty days) from the date of the promulgation of the Bull, of making his submission in writing before ecclesiastical witnesses, or of coming to Rome under the safe conduct guaranteed by the Bull; he was also to commit his books to the flames; in default of this, by virtue of the Papal declaration, he would, *ipso facto*, incur the penalties of open heresy as a notorious heretic (i.e. be cut off from the Communion of the Faithful by excommunication); every secular authority, including the Emperor, was bound, in accordance with the law, to

[1] Schulte, "Quellen und Forschungen," p. 45.

[2] In Schulte (*ibid.*, p. 49) this circumstance, on which theology must necessarily lay great stress, is passed over. Not all Luther's propositions were branded as "heretical."

enforce these penalties. A similar sentence was pronounced against all Luther's followers, aiders or abettors.

With respect to the terms in which the Papal Edict is couched, the severe criticism of certain Protestant writers might perhaps have been somewhat less scathing had they taken into account the traditional usages of the Roman Chancery, instead of judging them by the standard of the legal language of to-day. Such are the harsh passages quoted from Holy Scripture, which may appear to us unduly irritating and violent. When all is said, moreover, is it to be wondered at, that, after the unspeakably bitter and insulting attacks on the Papacy and the destruction of a portion of the German Church, strong feelings should have found utterance in the Bull?

The document begins with the words of the Bible: "Arise, O God, judge thine own cause: remember thy reproaches with which the foolish man hath reproached thee all the day" (Ps. lxxiii. 22). "Shew me thy face; catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines" (Cant. ii. 15). . . . "The boar out of the wood hath laid it waste: and a singular wild beast hath devoured it" (Ps. lxxix. 14). "Lying teachers have arisen who set up schools of perdition and bring upon themselves speedy destruction; their tongue is a fire full of the poison of death," etc. "They spit out the poison of serpents, and when they see themselves vanquished they raise calumnies." "We are determined to resist this pestilence and this eating canker, the noxious adder must no longer be permitted to harm the vineyard of the Lord." These, the strongest expressions, are taken almost word for word from the Bible; they might, moreover, be matched by much stronger passages in Luther's own writings against the authorities of the Church.

Further on the Pope addresses, in a mild, fatherly and conciliatory fashion, the instigator of the dreadful schism within a Christendom hitherto united. "Mindful of the compassion of God Who desireth not the death of a sinner, but that he be converted and live, we are ready to forget the injury done to us and to the Holy See. We have decided to exercise the greatest possible indulgence and, so far as in our power lies, to seek to induce the sinner to enter into himself and to renounce the errors we have enumerated, so that we may see him return to the bosom of the Church and receive him with kindness, like the prodigal son in the Gospel. We therefore exhort him and his followers through the love and mercy of our God and the precious blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the human race was redeemed and the Church founded, and adjure them that they cease from troubling with their deadly errors the peace, unity and truth of the Church for which the Saviour prayed so fer-

vently to His Father. They will then, if they prove obedient, find us full of fatherly love and be received with open arms."

Luther was aware that, after the promulgation of the Bull, he could place no further hope in the Emperor Charles V, whose devotion to the Church was well known, but he was sure of the protection of his Elector.[1] It was clear to Luther that, without the support of the Elector, the execution of the Bull by the secular power after the excommunication had come into force would mean his death.

Before publicly burning his boats he launched among the people his booklet "Von den newen Eckischenn Bullen und Lügen,"[2] pretending that the Bull (which he knew to be genuine) was merely a fabrication of Dr. Eck's. Here, with a bold front, he repeated that his doctrine had not yet been condemned, nor the controversy decided, and that all the hubbub was merely the result of Eck's personal hatred.

This was shortly after followed by the pamphlet "Against the Bull of 'End-Christ,'"[3] issued by his indefatigable press. The Latin version of the little work, brimming over with hatred, was ready by the end of October, 1520.

Although, in order to keep up the pretence of doubting the authenticity of the Bull, he here deals with it hypothetically, he nevertheless implores the Pope and his Cardinals, should they really have issued it, to reflect, otherwise he would be forced to curse their abode as the dwelling-place of Antichrist. In the same strain he proceeds: "Where art thou, good Emperor, and you, Christian Kings and Princes? You took an oath of allegiance to Christ in baptism and yet you endure these hellish voices of Antichrist."[4]

In the German version, from motives of policy, the tone is rather milder. Luther shrank from instigating the German princes too openly to violent measures. The appeal to them and to the Emperor is there omitted. The call to the people, however, rings loud and enthusiastic: "Would it be a wonder if the Princes, the Nobility and the laity were to knock the Pope, the Bishops, parsons and monks on the head and drive them out of the land?" For the action of Rome is heretical, the Pope, the Bishops, the parsons and the monks were bringing the laity about their ears by this "blasphemous, insulting Bull." Then he suddenly pulls himself up, but to very little purpose, and adds: "not that I wish to incite the laity against the clergy,

[1] Kalkoff, "Forschungen," p. 543 ff.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 576 ff; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 17 ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 595 ff. [38 f.]. "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 132 *seq.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 603; "Opp. Lat. var.," 5. p. 142.

but rather that we should pray to God that He may turn aside His wrath from them, and set them free from the evil spirit that has possessed them."[1]

In the German version, however, he refers more distinctly to the existence of "the Bulls against Dr. Luther which are said to have recently come from Rome."[2] He here declares, as to the theological question involved, that "as a matter of fact the whole Christian Church cannot err," viz. "all Christians throughout the whole world," but that the Pope is guilty of the most devilish presumption in setting up his own opinion, as though it were as good as that of the whole Church. The work is thus levelled at the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, which had always been accepted in the Church in cases where the Pope decides on matters of doctrine as supreme judge; this doctrine had ever been taken for granted, and stood in the forefront in all the measures previously taken by the Church against the attacks of heretics. Even in those days the Church had always based her action against separatists on her infallibility as a teacher.

In view of the existing political conditions there was but little hope that it would be possible for the General Council, to which Luther had appealed, to meet at an early date. At the time of Luther's uprising, moreover, the state of feeling, both in ecclesiastical circles and among the laity, gave little promise of good results even in the event of the calling together of a great Council. The stormy so-called Reforming Councils of the fifteenth century had shown the dangers of the prevailing spirit of independence, and the feeling among the ecclesiastical authorities was, from motives of caution, averse to the holding of Councils. Luther, on his part, was well aware how futile was his appeal to a General Council.

That his request was useless and only intended to gain time was apparent to all who had any discernment, when, on November 17, 1520, he again appealed to a "free Christian Council." Luther's appeal was published at the same time as his Latin work "Against the Bull of End-Christ." Its character is plain from its invitation to the people "to oppose the mad action of the Pope." It was a method of agitation calculated to call forth the applause of those who had become accustomed to the ecclesiastical radicalism of the so-called reforming Councils.

Luther gave practical effect to his view regarding the

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 46. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

value to be set on solemn Papal decrees on faith by his famous act before the Elster Gate of Wittenberg.

On December 10 he there proceeded to burn the Bull of Excommunication amid the acclamations of his followers amongst the students, whom he had invited to the spectacle by a public notice exhibited at the University. Not the Bull only was committed to the flames, but, according to the programme, also "books of the Papal Constitutions and of scholastic theology." Besides the Bull the following were cast into the great fire: the Decretum of Gratian, the Decretals with the "Liber Sextus," the Clementines and the Extravagants, also the Summa Angelica of Angelus de Clavasio, the work then most in use on the Sacrament of Penance, books by Eck, particularly that entitled "Chrysopassus," some by Emser, and others, too, offered by the zeal of private individuals. The recently discovered account by Johann Agricola says, that the works of Thomas and Scotus would also have been consigned to the flames but that no one was willing to deprive himself of them for this purpose. According to this writer, whose information is fuller than that of the authority generally quoted, Luther, while in the act of burning the Bull, pronounced the words: "Because thou hast destroyed the truth of the Lord, the Lord consume thee in this fire" (cp. Josue vii. 25).[1]

A few weeks later Luther related, not without pride, how the students "in the Carnival days made the Pope figure in the show [the students being dressed up to play the part], seated on a car with great pomp; it was really too droll. At the stream in the market-place they allowed him to escape with his Cardinals, bishops and attendants; he was then

[1] For the accounts of the burning, see M. Perlbach and J. Luther, "Ein neuer Bericht über Luthers Verbrennung der Bannbulle" ("SB. der preuss. Akad. der Wissenschaft.," and also apart), Berlin, 1907, and Kawerau, in "Theol. Studien," 1908, p. 587. Luther's words, quoted in the new account, run as follows: "*Quia tu conturbasti veritatem Dei, conturbat et te hodie in ignem istum* (instead of '*igni isto*'). *Amen*"; whereupon all those present answered, "*Amen.*" The form given before this ran: "*Quia tu conturbasti sanctum Dei, ideoque te conturbet ignis æternus.*" Were this correct, "*sanctum Dei*" would refer to Christ as the "Holy One of God," according to the biblical expression, but we should scarcely be justified in taking it to mean Luther himself, as some Catholics have done, as though he had arrogated to himself this title. With regard to the books burnt, see also Luther's letter to Spalatin, on December 10, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 18. On Thomas and Scotus see the source quoted above.

chased through various parts of the city: everything was well and grandly planned; for the enemy of Christ is deserving of such mockery, since he himself mocks at the greatest Princes and even Christ Himself. The verses which describe the whole scene are now being printed." This was how Luther wrote to Spalatin, who was then with the Elector at the Diet of Worms.[1]

Evil things were in store for Luther at Worms. It seemed that his summons thither was unavoidable, since Pope Leo X, in the new Bull, "*Decet Romanum Pontificem*," of January 3, 1521, had declared that Luther, owing to his persistent contumacy, had, *ipso facto*, incurred excommunication and become liable to the penalties already decreed by law against heretics.

Certain historians have extolled the great calmness which Luther preserved even during the stormy days when the excommunication arrived; they will have it that his composure of mind never deserted him. He himself, however, speaks otherwise.

According to his own statements contained in the letters which give so speaking a testimony to the state of his mind, he frequently did not know what he was doing, and blindly obeyed the impulse which drove him onward. Luther's behaviour at that time was the very reverse of the clear-sighted, enlightened and self-controlled conduct of holy and virtuous Churchmen when in the midst of storm and stress. He himself confessed with regard to his polemics: "Yes, indeed, I feel that I am not master of myself (*compos mei non sum*). I am carried away and know not by what spirit. I wish evil to none, but I am not on my guard against Satan, and it is to this that the fury of my enemies is due."[2]

To explain this inward turmoil we must take into account, not only the excommunication, but also the unexampled overexertion which at that time taxed his mental and physical powers. He was necessarily in a state of the utmost nervous tension. "Works of the most varied kind," he says, in the letter quoted, "carry my thoughts in all directions. I have to speak publicly no less than twice daily. The revision of the Commentary on the Psalms engages my attention. At the same time I am preparing sermons for the press, I am also writing against my enemies, opposing the Bull in Latin and in German and working

[1] On February 17, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 87. For the printed verses, Enders, like Köstlin, refers to Selneccer, "Vita Lutheri," Witteb., 1687, p. 133.

[2] To Conrad Pellican, at the end of February, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 93.

at my defence. Besides this I write letters to my friends. I am also obliged to entertain my ordinary visitors at home." At this time Luther not unfrequently kept three printing-presses at work at once.

Never before had Gutenberg's art been of such service to any public cause; all Germany was flooded with Luther's writings with bewildering rapidity.

He commenced printing the booklet "To the Christian Nobility" before it was fully written, and its plan he settled whilst a second pamphlet of his against Prierias was passing through the press. This, in turn, was accompanied by a booklet against the Franciscan Alveld. Between the publication of the three so-called great "Reformation works," which, with the new editions immediately called for, followed each other in rapid succession, came the printing of a sermon on the New Testament and the tracts already mentioned: "Von den newen Eckischenn Bullen," and "Against the Bull of Antichrist" (in Latin); then followed the publication of his "Warumb des Bapsts und seyner Jüngern Bücher vorbrant seyn," then the "Defence of all the Propositions" condemned in the Bull (in Latin), then the controversial pamphlets: "An den Bock zu Leyptzck" (Hieronymus Emser), and "Auff des Bocks zu Leypczick Antwort" At the same time, however, he published some religious works of a practical nature, namely the "Tessaradekas," a book of consolation for suffering and perturbed Christians, and the commencement of his exposition of the Magnificat. The latter he dedicated to Johann Friedrich, the Elector's nephew; it is not only improving in tone, but was also of practical use in increasing the esteem in which he was held at Court.

Such incredible overtaxing of his strength naturally resulted in a condition of serious mental strain, at the very time, too, when Luther had to weigh in his mind profound and momentous questions, vital problems, the treatment of which called for the most utmost recollection and composure.

"While I am preaching to others, I myself am a castaway," so he once writes in biblical terms in a letter to Staupitz,[1] "so much does intercourse with men carry me away." Pope Leo X,

[1] On February 9, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 83.

whose personal qualities he had shortly before been praising, becomes in this letter a wolf, who in his Bull has condemned all that Staupitz had taught regarding God's mercy. Christ Himself is condemned by the Pope, damned and blasphemed. Staupitz might well exhort him to humility, for, alas, he knew he was proud, but Staupitz, on his part, was too humble, otherwise he would not retreat before the Pope. "Men may accuse me of every vice, of pride, adultery, murder and even of Anti-popery, but may I never be guilty of a godless silence in the presence of those who are crucifying our Lord afresh. . . . Therefore at least suffer me to go on and be carried away even though you may not yourself agree to follow (*sine me ire et rapi*)." It is here that he appeals to the assistance of Hutten and his party, and to the intervention of the Elector Frederick in the words already quoted.[1]

And yet he confesses to a certain nervousness: "At first I trembled and I prayed while burning the Papal books and the Bull. But now I am more rejoiced at this than at any previous act of my life: they [the Romanists] are a worse pestilence than I had thought." This he writes to his same fatherly friend, Staupitz.[2]

His perturbation, which had become to him almost a life-element, served to dispel his fears and his doubts: "I am battling with the floods and am carried away by them ("*fluctibus his rapior et volvor*"). "The noise [of strife] rages mightily. Both sides are putting their heart into it."[3] Catholics discern with grief in this uncanny joy a sad attempt on his part to find encouragement in the preposterous notion he fostered of the "devilishness" of the Papacy. They will also perceive in his outbursts of rage, and in the challenges to violence in which he indulges in unguarded moments, the effect of the excommunication working on a mind already stirred to its innermost depths. When we hear him declare in a popular pamphlet, after the arrival of the Papal Bull, that it would not be surprising were the Princes, the nobility and laity to hit the Pope, the bishops, priests and monks over the head and drive them out of the land,[4] we find that such language agrees only too well with his furious words in his tract written in 1520

[1] He praises the Prince, saying that he walks "*prudenter, fideliter*," and "*constanter*." Cp. above p. 8.

[2] January 14, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 70

[3] Both sentences, *ibid.*

[4] Above, p. 49. Epitome of Prierias with Preface and Postscript (Latin). "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 347. The commencement of the passage is quoted above, p. 13.

against Priérias, where he compares the Pope and his followers to a band of cut-throats.

If murderers are punished with the sword, why then should we not proceed with still greater severity against those "teachers of perdition" who are determined not to repent? "Why do we not attack them with every weapon that comes to hand and wash our hands in their blood, if we thereby save ourselves and ours from the most dangerous of flames? How happy are those Christians who are not obliged like us, the most miserable of men, to live under such an Antichrist." Recognising the ominous character of the passage "*Cur non . . . manus nostras in sanguine istorum lavamus*," etc., later Lutherans added certain words which appear first in the Jena edition (German translation) in 1555: "But God Who says (Deut. xxxii. 35, Rom. xii. 19) 'Vengeance is mine' will find out these His enemies in good time, who are not worthy of temporal punishment, but whose punishment must be eternal in the abyss of hell." These words, which are not found in the original edition of 1520, are given in Walch's edition of Luther, vol. xviii., p. 245. The argument in exoneration of Luther, based upon them by a recent Lutheran, thus falls to the ground. The addition will be sought for in vain in the Weimar edition (6, p. 347 f.), and in that of Erlangen ("Opp. Lat. var." 2, p. 107). Paulus has proved that the falsification of the text was the work of Nicholas Amsdorf, who was responsible for the Jena edition, though in the Preface he protests that his edition of Luther's works is free from all correction or addition.[1]

In view of the inflammatory language which he hurled among the crowd, assurances of an entirely different character, which, when it suited his purpose, he occasionally made for the benefit of the Court, really deserve less consideration. In these he is desirous of disclaiming beforehand the responsibility for any precipitate and dangerous measures taken by men like Hutten, and such as Spalatin in his anxiety fancied he foresaw. What Luther wrote on January 16, 1521, was addressed to him and intended for the Elector;[2] here he says that the war for the Gospel ought not to be waged by violence and manslaughter, because Antichrist is to be destroyed by "the Word" alone. On this occasion he expresses the wish that God would restrain the fury of those men who threatened to injure His good cause and who might bring about a general rising against the clergy such as had taken place in Bohemia (i.e. the Husite insurrection).[3]

[1] On the falsification of Luther's works in the early editions, see G. Arnold, "Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie," 2, 1727, p. 419 ff.; Paulus, "Protestantismus und Toleranz im 16. Jahrh.," 1911, p. 17.

[2] To Spalatin at Worms, January 16, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 73.

[3] In the same month he wrote to Hutten to the same effect: "*Nollem vi et cæde pro evangelio certari.*" The letter, however, did not reach its destination. Enders, 3, p. 74, n. 8.

He foresees, however, that the Romanists will bring this misfortune upon themselves through their obstinate resistance to "the Word." As yet they were holding back (so he wrote when the meeting at Worms had commenced); but, should their fury burst forth, then, it was generally apprehended that it would lead to a regular Bohemian revolt in Germany, in which the clergy would suffer; he himself, however, was certainly not to blame, as he had advised the nobility to proceed against the Romanists with "edicts" and not with the sword.[1]

The menacing attitude of the Knights seemed to Luther sufficiently favourable to his cause without their actually declaring war. We shall return later to Luther's ideas regarding the use of force in support of the Evangel (vol. iii. xv. 3).

As for the above-mentioned references to Antichrist, we can only assume that he had gradually persuaded himself that the Pope really was the Antichrist of the Bible. According to his opinion the Antichrist of prophecy was not so much a definite person as the Papacy as a whole, at least in its then degenerate form. So thoroughly did he imbue his mind with those biblical images which appealed to him, and so vivid were the pictures conjured up by his imagination of the wickedness of his foes, that we cannot be surprised if the idea he had already given expression to, viz. that the Pope was Antichrist,[2] took more and more possession of him. Owing to the pseudo-mysticism, under the banner of which he carried on his war against the Church of Rome, he was the more prone to indulge in such a view. His lamentations over Babylon and Antichrist, and his intimate persuasion that he had unmasked Antichrist and that therefore the second coming of Christ was imminent (see below), undoubtedly rested on a morbid, pseudo-mystic foundation.

At about that time he set forth his ideas regarding Antichrist in learned theological form, for the benefit of readers

[1] Letter to Spalatin in Worms, February 27, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 90: The wrath of the Papists was being stayed by a Divine decree.

[2] See volume i., p. 359. H. Preuss, "Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist im Mittelalter," 1909, gives instances of writers who anticipated Luther in seeing Antichrist in the Pope. He looks upon Luther's controversial writings on the subject of Antichrist as justified. "All Lutheran Christendom at the Reformation period," according to him, shared "its master's" views and expectation of the approaching end of the world (p. 196); he thinks it quite in order that the article regarding Antichrist "should have been incorporated in the Lutheran Confession of Faith" (p. 181).

of every nation, in a Latin exposition of the prophecies of Daniel, in which, according to him, the Papacy is predicted as Antichrist and described in minutest detail. This strange commentary is found in his reply to the Italian theologian Ambrose Catharinus: "*Ad librum Catharini responsio.*"[1] Cultured foreign readers can scarcely have gained from these pages a very favourable impression of the imaginative German monk's method of biblical exposition. This curious tract followed too quickly upon that to which it was a reply. Luther received a copy of the book against him by Catharinus on March 6 or 7, yet, in order to forestall the effect of the work on the Diet of Worms, in the course of the same month he composed the lengthy reply which is all steeped in mystical fanaticism. From that time forward the crazy fiction that the Pope was Antichrist gained more and more hold of him, so that even towards the end of his life, as we shall see, he again set about decking it out with new and more forceful proofs from Holy Scripture.

Luther's frame of mind again found expression in a tract which he launched among the people not long after, viz. the "Deuttung des Munchkalbes."[2] Here he actually seeks to show in all seriousness that the horrors of the Papacy, and particularly of the religious state, had been pointed out by heaven through the birth of a misshapen calf, an occurrence which at that time was attracting notice. Passages from the Bible, and likewise Apocalyptic dreams, were pressed in to serve the author of this lamentable literary production.

Yet, in spite of all these repulsive exaggerations with which his writings were crammed, nay, on account of these images of a heated imagination, the attack upon the old Church called forth by Luther served its purpose with all too many. Borne on the wings of a hatred inspired by a long-repressed grudge, his pamphlets were disseminated with lightning speed by discontented Catholics. Language of appalling coarseness, borrowed from the lips of the lowest of the populace, seemed to carry everything before it, and the greater the angry passion it displayed the greater was its success. What one man's words can achieve under favourable circumstances was never, anywhere in the history

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 698 ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, 11, p. 357–373; Erl. ed., 29, p. 1–16.

of the world, so clearly exemplified as in Germany in those momentous days. Luther's enthusiastic supporters read his writings aloud and explained them to the people in the squares and market-places, and the stream of eloquence falling on ready ears proved far more effective than the warnings of the clergy, who in many places were regarded with suspicion or animosity.

Spalatin, in the meantime, was engaged in trying to prevent Luther from incurring the only too well-founded reproach of openly inciting people to revolt against the authority of the Empire; with such a charge against him it would have been difficult for the Elector of Saxony to protect him.

As, during Spalatin's stay at Worms, the burning of Luther's books had already begun in various places, owing to the putting in force of the Bull "*Exsurge Domine*," the courtier was at pains to advise his impetuous friend as to what he should do respecting such measures. He counselled Luther to compose a pamphlet addressed to penitents, dealing with the forbidden books, the matter being a practical one owing to the likelihood of people confessing in the tribunal of penance that they possessed works of Luther. It was no easy task to deal with this question of the duty of confession. Luther, however, felt himself supported by the attitude assumed by the Elector, at whose command, so he says, he had first published his new booklet against the Bull, "Grund und Ursach aller Artickel" (Ground and Reason of all the [condemned] Articles), in German and Latin.[1]

He therefore determined to carry his war into the confessional and, by means of a printed work, to decide, in his own favour, the pressing, practical question regarding his books. The flames were blazing in the bishopries of Merseburg and Meissen, and to them were consigned such of Luther's writings as had been given up by Catholics or halting disciples. Easter, too, was drawing near with the yearly confession. Many a conscience might be stirred up by the exhortations of pious confessors and be aroused to renewed loyalty to the Church. Luther's pamphlet, entitled

[1] To Staupitz in Salzburg, February 9, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 85: "*Princeps noster, cuius iussu assertiones istas utraque lingua edo.*"

"Unterricht der Beychtkinder ubir die vorpotten Bücher" (An Instruction for Penitents concerning the prohibited books), which appeared in the earlier part of February, 1521, affords us an insight into the strategies adopted by Lutheranism at its inception.

The language of this tract is, for a writer like Luther, extremely moderate and circumspect, for its object was to enlist in his cause the most secret and intimate of all acts, that of the penitent in confession; its apparent reticence made it all the more seductive. In his new guise of an instructor of consciences, Luther here seems fully to recognise the Sacrament of Confession. He has no wish, so he protests, to introduce "strife, disputation and dissension into the holy Sacrament of Confession."[1]

The penitent, who is in the habit of reading his works, he tells to beg his confessor in "humble words," should he question him, not to trouble him concerning Luther's books. He is to say to his confessor: "Give me the Absolution to which I have a right, and, after that, wrangle about Luther, the Pope and whomsoever else you please." He encourages his readers to make such a request by explaining that these books, and likewise Luther's guilt, have not yet been duly examined, that many were in doubt about the Bull, that Popes had often changed their minds upon similar matters and contradicted themselves, and that a confessor would therefore be acting tyrannically were he to demand that the books should be given up; this was, however, the unfair treatment to which he had ever been subjected. There was only one thing wanting, namely, that Luther should have repeated what he had shortly before declared, that, for the sake of peace, he would "be quite happy to see his books destroyed," if only people were permitted to keep and read the Bible.[2]

He continues: Since it might happen that some would be conscientiously unable to part with his writings, owing to knowledge or suspicion of the truth, such people should quietly waive their claim to Absolution should it be withheld. They were nevertheless to "rejoice and feel assured that they had really been absolved in the sight of God and approach the Sacrament without any shrinking." Those who were more courageous, however, and had a "strong conscience" were to say plainly to the "taskmaster" (the confessor): "You have no right to force me against my conscience, as you yourself know, or ought to know, Romans xiv." "Confessors are not to meddle with the judgment of God, to whom alone are reserved the secrets of the heart." If, however, communion be refused, then all were first to "ask for it humbly," "and if that was of no avail, then they were to let Sacrament, altar, parson and Church go"; for

[1] Reprinted "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 284 ff.; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 206 ff.

[2] "Widder die Bullen des Endchrists," "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 616; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 40.

" contrary to God's Word and your conscience no commandment can be made, or hold good if made, as they themselves all teach."

Such a view of the functions of a confessor and of his duty as a judge appointed by authority had certainly never been taught in the Church, but was entirely novel and unheard of, however much it might flatter the ears of the timid, and of those who wavered or were actually estranged from the Church. Most of his readers were unaware how shamelessly their adviser was contradicting himself, and how this apparently well-meaning instructor of consciences in the confessional was the very man who in previous polemical tracts had denied that there was any difference between priests and laymen.[1] Towards the close of this Instruction, however, the author reappears in his true colours, and whereas, at the commencement when introducing himself, he had spoken of confession as a holy Sacrament, at the end he describes it as an unjust invention of the priesthood, and, indeed, in his eyes, it was really a mere " human institution." Towards the conclusion, where he relapses into his wonted threatening and abusive language, he " begs all prelates and confessors " not to torture consciences in the confessional lest the people should begin to question " whence their authority and the practice of private confession came " ; as if his very words did not convey to the reader an invitation to do so. " The result," he prudently reminds them, " might be a revolt in which they [the prelates] might be worsted. For though confession is a most wholesome thing, everyone knows how apt some are to take offence." He points out how in his case the authorities had driven him further and further, well-intentioned though he was : " How many things would never have happened had the Pope and his myrmidons not treated me with violence and deceit."[2]

The Easter confession that year might prove decisive to thousands. The little earnestness shown by too many in the practice of their religion, the laxity of the German clergy, even the apparent insignificance of the question of retaining or perusing certain books, all this was in his favour. In the above tract he set before the devout souls who were " tyrannised " by their confessors the example of Christ and His Saints, who all had suffered persecution ; " we must ask God to make us worthy of suffering for the sake of His Word." The more imaginative, he likewise warned of the approaching end of the world. " Remember that it was foretold that in the days of ' End-Christ ' no one will be allowed to preach, and that all will be looked upon as outcasts who speak or listen to the Word of God." Those who hesitated and were scrupulous about keeping Luther's writings, seeing they had been prohibited by law and episcopal decrees as " blasphemous," he sought to reassure by declaring that his books were nothing of the kind, for in them he had attacked the person neither of the Pope nor of any prelate, but had merely

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 395, where this contradiction is pointed out.

[2] " Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 297 f. ; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 212.

blamed vices, and that if they were to be described as blasphemous, then the same "must be said of the Gospel and the whole of Holy Scripture."[1]

Thus, in this ingenious work, each one found something suited to his disposition and his scruples and calculated to lead him astray. The culmination is, however, in the words already adduced: Nothing against conscience, nothing against the Word of God! The "enslaved conscience" and the "commanding Word of God," these are the catchwords of which Luther henceforth makes use so frequently and to such purpose. He employs these terms as a cloak to conceal the complete emancipation of the mind from every duty towards a rule of faith and ecclesiastical authority which he really advocates. The "commanding Word of God," on his lips, means the right of independent, private interpretation of the sacred Books, though he reserves to himself the first place in determining their sense.

Conscience and the Word of God, words with which Luther had familiarised the masses from the commencement of his apostasy, were also to be his cry at the Diet of Worms in 1521, when he stood before the supreme spiritual and temporal authorities there assembled around the Emperor. Uttered there before Church and Empire, this cry was to re-echo mightily and to bring multitudes to his standard.

2. The Diet of Worms, 1521; Luther's Attitude

The Diet had been assembled at Worms around the Emperor since January 27, 1521.

Charles V showed himself in religious questions a staunch supporter of the Catholic Church, to which indeed he was most devotedly attached. He was not, however, always well-advised, and the multitudinous cares of his empire frequently blinded him to the real needs of the Church, or else made it impossible for him to act as he would have wished.

On February 13, 1521, in the presence of the Princes and the States-General of the Empire, Hieronymus Aleander, the Papal Legate accredited to the Diet, delivered the speech, which has since become historic, on the duty of the Empire to take action against Luther as a notorious, obstinate heretic, definitively condemned by the supreme Papal Court.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 297; Erl. ed., 24, p. 212.

He did not fail to point out, that "it was a fact of common knowledge that Luther was inciting the people to rebellion and that, like the heretics of Bohemia, he was destroying all law and order in the name and semblance of the Gospel."[1]

On March 6 Luther was summoned to appear before the Diet at Worms, the Emperor furnishing him with an escort and guaranteeing his safe return. Encouraged by the latter promise, secure in the favour of his own sovereign, and assured of the support of the Knights, he decided to comply with the summons.

The thought of bearing testimony to his newly discovered Evangel before the whole country and enjoying the opportunity, by his appearance in so public a place, of rousing others to enthusiasm for the work he had undertaken urged him on. Severe bodily ailments from which he was suffering at that time did not deter him. His illness, he declared, was merely a trick of "the devil to hinder him"; on his part he would do all he could to "affright and defy him." "Christ lives, and we shall enter Worms in spite of all the gates of hell and the powers of the air."[2] To Spalatin we owe an echo from one of Luther's letters at that time: "He was determined to go to Worms though there should be as many devils there as there were tiles on the roofs."[3]

The journey to Worms resembled a sort of triumphal progress, owing to the festive reception everywhere prepared for him by his friends, and in particular by the Humanists.

His arrival at Erfurt was celebrated beforehand by Eobanus Hessus in a flattering poem. On April 6 the Rector of the University, Crotus Rubeanus, with forty professors and a great crowd of people, went out to meet him when he was still three leagues from the city. The address delivered by Rubeanus at the meeting expressed gratitude for the "Divine apparition" which was vouchsafed to them in the coming of the "hero of the Evangel."[4]

[1] Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," 2^{18}, p. 165. "Hist. of the German People," Engl. Trans., 3, p. 178.

[2] Letter to Spalatin, April 14, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 121. "Tischreden," "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 75.

[3] Spalatin's "Annals," ed. Cyprian, 1718, p. 38. Cp. Enders, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 122, n. 5; "Tischreden," "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 75.

[4] Janssen-Pastor, 2^{18}, p. 174, Engl. Trans., 3, 189.

On the following day Luther preached in the Church of the Augustinians. He spoke of good works: "One erects churches, another makes a pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella or to St. Peter's, a third fasts and prays, wears a cowl or goes barefoot . . . such works are of no avail and must be done away with. Mark these words: All our works are worthless. I am your justification, says Christ our Lord, I have destroyed the sins with which you are loaded; therefore believe only that it is I alone who have done this and you will be justified." Luther fired invectives against the intolerable yoke of the Papacy and against the clergy who "slaughtered the sheep instead of leading them to pasture." Himself he represents as persecuted by the would-be righteous, the Pope and his Bull, on account of his teaching which was directed against the false self-righteousness arising from works.[1]

On the occasion of this sermon Luther, as his followers asserted, performed his first miracle, quelling a disturbance excited by the devil during the sermon in the overcrowded church; the interruption ceased when Luther had exorcised the fiend.[2]

At Erfurt the enthusiasm for his cause became so great that on the day after his departure riots broke out, the so-called "Pfaffensturm" or priest-riot, which will be considered below (xiv. 5), together with other circumstances attending the introduction of the new Evangel at Erfurt. Luther was at the time silent concerning the occurrence.[3] Not long after his arrival at the Wartburg, referring to similar scenes of violence, he says, in a letter to Melanchthon: "The priests and monks raged against me like madmen when I was free; but now that I am a captive they are afraid and have restrained their insane action. They cannot endure the common people who now have them under their heel. Behold the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, Who is working for us while we are silent, suffer and pray."[4] Nevertheless, when all was over, he protested against the acts of violence committed at Erfurt in a letter to Spalatin, which was found in that courtier's library.[5]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 249 ff.
[2] Janssen-Pastor, 2^{18}, p. 175, Engl. Trans., 3, 190.
[3] *Ibid.*, Enders, p. 156, n. 4.
[4] Previous to May 12, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 147.
[5] About the middle of May, 1521, *ibid.*, p. 158.

On the journey through Thuringia he met the Prior of the Rheinhardsbrunn monastery, whom he exhorted as follows: "Say an Our Father for our Lord Christ that His Father may be gracious to Him. If He upholds His cause, then mine also is assured."[1] Such was the strange manner in which he expressed his real inward feelings. Those who expected him to recant at Worms did not know their man.

Reaching Worms on April 16 he was, on the following day, submitted to the first interrogation. To the question whether he was the author of the books mentioned, he replied in the affirmative, and when exhorted to retract his errors he begged for "a respite and time for consideration" that, as he says in his own notes at the time, "as I have to give a verbal answer I may not through want of caution say too much, or too little, to repent of it later," especially as it was a matter concerning "the highest good in heaven or on earth, the Holy Word of God and the faith." The respite granted was only for one day. On April 18 he declared boldly, at his second interrogation, that any retractation of the books he had written against the Pope was impossible for him, since he would thereby be strengthening his tyranny and unchristian spirit; the consciences of Christians were held captive in the most deplorable fashion by the Papal laws and the doctrines of men; even the property of the German nation was swallowed up by the rapacity of the Romans. He would repeat what Christ had said before the High Priest and his servants: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil"; if the Lord was willing to listen to the testimony of a servant, "how much more must I, the lowest erring creature, wait and see whether any man brings forward testimony adverse to my teaching." He asks, therefore, to be convinced of error and confuted by the Bible. "I shall be most ready if I am shown to be wrong to retract every error." He owed it to Germany, his native land, to warn those in high station to beware of condemning the truth. After recommending himself to the protection of the Emperor against his enemies, he concluded with the words: "I have spoken."

On returning after this to the inn through the staring crowds, no sooner had he reached the threshold than "he

[1] "Ratzebergers Geschichte," ed. Neudecker, p. 30.

stretched out his arms and cried with a cheerful countenance : ' I have got through, I have got through.' "[1]

The Emperor bade him begone from that very hour, but the Estates, who were divided in their views as to the measures to be taken, feared a " revolt in the Holy Empire," owing to the strength of the feeling in his favour and the threats uttered by his armed friends, should " steps be taken against him so hurriedly and without due trial." Accordingly an effort was made to persuade Luther by friendly means, through the intermediary of a commission consisting of certain clerical and lay members of the Diet under the Archbishop of Treves, Richard of Greiffenklau. Their pains were, however, in vain.[2]

Even some of his friends besought him to commit his cause to the Emperor and the Estates of the Empire, but likewise to no purpose. He also refused the proposal that he should submit to the joint decision of the Emperor and certain German prelates to be nominated by the Pope. All he would promise was to hearken to a General Council, but even this promise he qualified with a proviso which rendered his assent illusory : " So long as no judgment contrary or detrimental to the truth is pronounced." Who but Luther himself was to decide what was the truth ? Cochlæus made an offer, which under the circumstances was foredoomed to refusal, that a public disputation should be held with the Wittenberg monk ; to this Luther would not listen. Neither would he give an undertaking to refrain from preaching and writing.

His final declaration at the Diet was as follows : Seeing that a simple and straightforward answer was demanded of him, he would give it : " If I am not convinced by proofs from Scripture or clear theological reasons (' *ratione evidente* '), then I remain convinced by the passages which I have quoted from Scripture, and my conscience is held captive by the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract,

[1] Janssen-Pastor, 2, p. 177, n. 3. According to the evidence of an eye-witness, Sixtus Œlhafen.

[2] The report of the whole proceedings at Worms relating to Luther has been collected in volume ii. of the German " Reichstagsakten," new series, 1896, ed. A. Wrede ; see particularly Sections VII. (Negotiations with Luther, etc.) and XI. (Correspondence, with Aleander's reports). Cp. H. v. Schubert, " Quellen und Forschungen über Luther auf dem Reichstage zu Worms," 1899.

for to go against one's conscience is neither prudent nor right." He concluded this asseveration, after a protest had been raised and caused a tumult amongst the audience, with the words which passed almost unheard: "God help me, Amen!" The tragic and solemn setting which was very soon given to these not at all unusual concluding words, was an uncalled-for embellishment not in agreement with the oldest sources.[1]

After this, on April 26, in accordance with the command of the Emperor, he was obliged to quit Worms. An extension of the safe conduct for twenty-one days was expressly granted him, coupled, however, with the injunction not to preach or publish anything on the way. Two days later, while on his journey, Luther forwarded a missive to the Emperor and another to the Estates in his own defence, the latter being immediately printed by his friends as a broadsheet. The print depicted Luther with a halo, and the dove or symbol of the Holy Ghost hovering over him.

The fact that at the time the Diet was sitting a committee of the Estates brought forward, under a new form, the so-called "Gravamina of the German Nation" against the Roman See, was greatly to the advantage of Luther's cause. They consisted largely of legitimate suggestions for the amelioration of ecclesiastical conditions and the removal of the oppression exercised by the Curia. These were made the subject of debate, and were exploited in Luther's interests by those desirous of innovations. Those among the Humanists who sided with him, and likewise the Knights of the Empire, had taken various steps during his stay at Worms to strengthen his position and to frighten the Estates by hinting at violent action to be undertaken on his behalf.

Ulrich von Hutten wrote to him from the Ebernburg on April 17: "Keep a good heart . . . I will stand by you to the last breath if you remain true to yourself." He knows how those assembled at the Diet gnash their teeth at him; his fancy indeed paints things black, but his hope in God sustains him.[2] In a second letter of April 20, Hutten speaks to him of trusting not only in God and His Christ, but also in earthly weapons: "I

[1] See below, p. 75 f.

[2] In Luther's "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 124. The translation of "*Equidem atrocissima omnia concipio*," by "I will dare even the worst," is wrong, and the above, "My fancy paints things black," i.e. Luther's treatment at the Diet, is better. Cp. S. Merkle, "Reformationsgeschichtl. Streitfragen," 1904, p. 56 ff.

see that sword and bow, arrows and bolts are necessary in order to withstand the mad rage of the devil . . . the wisdom of my friends hinders me from a venture, because they fear lest I go too far, otherwise I should already have prepared some kind of surprise for these gentlemen under the walls [of Worms]. In a short time, however, my hand will be free, and then you shall see that I will not be wanting in the spirit which God has roused up in me."[1] In the same way as in his rhetorical language he ascribes his own mood to the illumination of the Spirit of God, so Hutten also sought to unearth a Divine inspiration in his friend Franz von Sickingen; all this was the outcome of Luther's pseudo-mysticism, to which his friends were indebted for such figures of speech. Regarding Sickingen, Hutten wrote to Willibald Pirkheimer: "He has, so to speak, drunk in Luther completely; he has his little books read aloud at table, and I have heard him swear that he will never forsake the cause of truth in spite of every danger." "You may well regard these words as a Divine Voice, so great is his constancy."[2]

Numerous threats of violence reached the ears of the timorous Estates assembled at Worms. A notice was affixed to the Rathaus in which 400 (?) sworn noblemen with 8000 (?) men challenged the "Princes and Messrs. the Romanists." It concluded with the watchword of the insurgents: "Bundschuh, Bundschuh, Bundschuh." Towards the close of the Diet several hundred knights assembled around Worms.[3]

At the Diet the Elector of Saxony made no secret of his patronage of Luther.

He it was who, on the evening before Luther's departure, informed him in the presence of Spalatin and others, that he would be seized on the homeward journey and conducted to a place of safety which would not be told him beforehand.[4]

[1] "Luthers Briefwechsel," 3, p. 126.

[2] On May 1, 1521, Janssen-Pastor, p. 184, from Böcking's edition of Hutten's works, 2, p. 59 ff.

[3] Janssen-Pastor, pp. 178, 184 f. The placard was known before, but a new rendering is found in the Mayence "Katholik," 1902, vol. lxxxii., p. 96, from a letter-Codex of the sixteenth century belonging to the Hamburg city library, No. 469. We give J. Beyl's translation: "This protest against Luther's condemnation is nailed to the Mint [at Worms]. Whereas we, to the number of IIC simple-minded sworn noblemen have agreed and pledged ourselves not to forsake that just man Luther, we hereby advise the Princes, gentlemen, Romanists, and, above all, the Bishop of Mayence, of our inveterate enmity, because honour and righteous justice have been oppressed by them; we do not mention other names [of those threatened] or describe the deeds of violence against the parsons and their supporters. Bundschuh." The numbers given vary, and IIC is perhaps a mistake of the copyist of the illegible placard. See "Freie Bayer. Schulzeitung," 1911, No. 6; but cp. also, Kalkoff, "Reformationsgesch.," 1911, p. 361 ff.

[4] Spalatin's "Annales," p. 50.

After having received this assurance Luther left Worms. On the journey such was his boldness that he disregarded the Imperial prohibition to preach, though he feared that this violation of the conditions laid down would be taken advantage of by his opponents, and cause him to forfeit his safe-conduct. He himself says of the sermons which he delivered at Hersfeld and Eisenach, on May 1 and 2, that they would be regarded as a breach of the obligations he had undertaken when availing himself of the safe conduct; but that he had been unable to consent that the Word of God should be bound in chains. He is here playing on the words of the Bible: "*Verbum Dei non est alligatum.*" "This condition, even had I undertaken it, would not have been binding, as it would have been against God."[1]

After the journey had been resumed the well-known surprise took place, and Luther was carried off to the Wartburg on May 4.

In his lonely abode, known to only a few of his friends, he awaited with concern the sentence of outlawry which was to be passed upon him by the Emperor and the Estates. The edict, in its final form of May 8, was not published until after the safe-conduct had expired. "To-morrow the Imperial safe conduct terminates," Luther wrote on May 11 from the Wartburg to Spalatin; ". . . It grieves me that those deluded men should call down such a misfortune upon their own heads. How great a hatred will this inconsiderate act of violence arouse. But only wait, the time of their visitation is at hand."[2] The proclamation of outlawry was couched in very stern language and enacted measures of the utmost severity, following in this the traditions of the Middle Ages; Luther's writings were to be burnt, and he himself was adjudged worthy of death. Of Luther the document says, that, "like the enemy of souls disguised in a monk's garb," he had gathered together "heresies old and new." The impression made by Luther on the Emperor and on other eminent members of the Diet, was that of one possessed.[3]

There was, from the first, no prospect of the sentence

[1] To Spalatin, May 14, 1521, from the Wartburg, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 154. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[3] Thus Aleander, in the passage quoted below. Janssen-Pastor, p. 184.

being carried into effect. The hesitation of the German Princes of the Church to publish even the Bull of Excommunication had shown that they were not to be trusted to put the new measures into execution.

The thoughts of retaliation which were aflame in Luther, i.e. his expectation of a "Divine judgment" on his adversaries, he committed to writing in a letter which he forwarded to Franz von Sickingen on June 1, 1521, together with a little work dedicated to him, "Concerning Confession, whether the Pope has the power to decree it."[1] In it he reminds Sickingen that God had slain thirty-one Kings in the land of Chanaan together with the inhabitants of their cities. "It was ordained by God that they should fight against Israel bravely and defiantly, that they should be destroyed and no mercy shown them. This story looks to me like a warning to our Popes, bishops, men of learning and other spiritual tyrants." He feared that it was God's work that they should feel themselves secure in their pride, "so that, in the end, they would needs perish without mercy." Unless they altered their ways one would be found who "would teach them, not like Luther by word and letter, but by deeds." We cannot here go into the question of why the revolutionary party in the Empire did not at that time proceed to "deeds."

3. Legends

The beginning of the legends concerning the Diet of Worms can be traced back to Luther himself. He declared, only a year after the event, shortly after his departure from the Wartburg, in a letter of July 15, 1522, intended for a few friends and not for German readers: "I repaired to Worms although I had already been apprised of the violation of the safe-conduct by the Emperor Charles."

He there says of himself, that, in spite of his timidity, he nevertheless ventured "within reach of the jaws of Behemoth [the monster mentioned in Job xl.]. And what did these terrible giants [my adversaries] do? During the last three years not one has been found brave enough to come forward against me here at Wittenberg, though assured of a safe-conduct and protection"; "rude and timorous at one and the same time" they would not venture "to confront him, though single-handed," or to dispute

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 75 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 168).

with him. What would have happened had these weaklings been forced to face the Emperor and all-powerful foes as he had done at Worms? This he says to the Bohemian, Sebastian Schlick, Count of Passun, in the letter in which he dedicates to him his Latin work "Against Henry VIII of England."[1] It is worth noting that Luther did not insert this dedication in the German edition, but only in the Latin one intended for Bohemia and foreign countries where the circumstances were not so well known.

Luther always adhered obstinately to the idea, which ultimately passed into a standing tradition with many of his followers, that no one had been willing to dispute with him at Worms or elsewhere during the period of his outlawry; that he had, in fact, been condemned unheard; that his opponents had sought to vanquish him by force, not by confronting him with proofs, and had obstinately shut their ears to his arguments from Holy Scripture. He finally came to persuade himself, that they were in their hearts convinced that he was right, but out of consideration for their temporal interests had not been willing or able to give in.

He expressly mentions Duke George of Saxony, as an opponent who had taken up the latter position, also the influential Archbishop Albrecht of Mayence, and, above all, Johann Eck. "Is it not obdurate wickedness," he exclaims in one of his outbursts, "to be the enemy of, and withstand, what is known and recognised as true? It is a sin against the first Commandment and greater than any other. But because it is not their invention they look on it as nought! Yet their own conscience accuses them."[2] In another passage, in 1528, he complains of the persecutors in Church and State who appealed to the edict of Worms; "they sought for an excuse to deceive the simple people, though they really knew better"; if they act thus, it must be right, "were we to do the same, it would be wrong."[3]

Yet, even from the vainglorious so-called "Minutes of the Worms Negotiations" ("Akten der Wormser Verhandlungen"), published immediately after at Wittenberg with Luther's assistance,[4] it is clear that the case was fully argued in his presence at Worms, and that he had every opportunity of defending himself, though, from a legal point of view, the Bull of Excommunication having already been promulgated, the question was no longer open to theological discussion. In these "Minutes" the speeches he made in his defence at Worms are quoted. Catholic contem-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 175 ff.; "Opp. Lat. var.," 6, p. 385 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 433).

[2] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 58, p. 412 f. ("Table-Talk").

[3] *Ibid.*, 63, p. 276.

[4] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 7, p. 825 ff.

poraries even reproached him with having allowed himself to be styled therein "Luther, the man of God"; his orations are introduced with such phrases as: "Martin replied to the rude and indiscreet questions with his usual incredible kindness and friendliness in the following benevolent words," etc.[1]

In order still further to magnify the bravery he displayed at Worms, Luther stated later on that the Pope had written to Worms, "that no account was to be made of the safe-conduct."[2] As a matter of fact, however, the Papal Nuncios at Worms had received instructions to use every effort to prevent Luther being tried in public, because according to Canon Law the case was already settled; if he refused to retract, and came provided with a safe-conduct, nothing remained but to send him home, and then proceed against him with the utmost severity.[3] It was for this reason, according to his despatches, that Aleander took no part in the public sessions at which Luther was present. Only after Luther, on the return journey, had sent back the herald who accompanied him, and had openly infringed the conditions of the Imperial safe-conduct, did Aleander propose "that the Emperor should have Luther seized."[4]

Luther, from the very commencement, stigmatised the Diet of Worms as the "Sin of Wormbs, which rejected God's truth so childishly and openly, wilfully and knowingly condemned it unheard"; [5] to him the members of the Diet were culpably hardened and obdurate "Pharaohs," who thought Christ could not see them, who, out of "utterly sinful wilfulness," were determined "to hate and blaspheme Christ at Wormbs," and to "kill the prophets, till God forsook them"; he even says: "In me they condemned innocent blood at Wormbs; . . . O thou unhappy nation, who beyond all others has become the lictor and executioner of End-Christ against God's saints and prophets."[6] An esteemed Protestant biographer of Luther is, however, at pains to point out, quite rightly, that the Diet could "not do otherwise than condemn Luther." "By rejecting the sentence of the highest court he placed himself outside the pale of the law of the land. Even his very friends were unable to take exception to this." It is, he says, "incorrect to make out, as so many do, that Luther's opponents were merely impious men who obstinately withstood the revealed truth." This author confines himself to remarking that, in his own view, it was a mistake to have "pronounced a formal sentence" upon such questions.[7]

[1] Cp. Thomas Morus, "*Responsio ad convitia Lutheri*" ("Opp." Lovanii, 1566), p. 60. [2] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 474 f.

[3] "Reichstagsakten," 2, p. 825, n. 1. Balan, "Monumenta reform. Luth." (1883 *seq.*), p. 85. J. Paquier, "Jérôme Aléandre," Paris, 1900, p. 243. [4] Paquier, p. 242.

[5] Letter to Hartmuth von Cronberg, a friend of Sickingen (middle of March, 1522). "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 125. ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 308). [6] *Ibid.*, p. 126 f.

[7] Kolde, "Luther," 1, p. 349.

That Luther, at the Diet of Worms, bore away the palm as the heroic defender of entire freedom of research and of conscience, and as the champion of the modern spirit, is a view not in accordance with a fair historical consideration of the facts.

He himself was then, and all through life, far removed from the idea of any freedom of conscience in the modern sense, and would have deemed all who dared to use it against Divine Revelation, as later opponents of religion did, as deserving of the worst penalties of the mediæval code. "It is an altogether one-sided view, one, indeed, which wilfully disregards the facts, to hail in Luther the man of the new age, the hero of enlightenment and the creator of the modern spirit." Such is the opinion of Adolf Harnack.[1]

At Worms, Luther spoke of himself as being bound by the Word of God. It is true he claimed the freedom of interpreting Holy Scripture according to his own mind, or, as he said, according to the understanding bestowed on him by God, and of amending all such dogmas as displeased him.

But he would on no account cease to acknowledge that a revealed Word of God exists and claims submission from the human mind, whereas, from the standpoint of the modern freethinker, there is no such thing as revelation. The liberty of interpreting revelation, which Luther proclaimed at Worms, or, to be more exact, calmly assumed, marked, it is true, a great stride forward in the road to the destruction of the Church.

Luther failed to point out at Worms how such liberty, or rather licence, agreed with the institutions established by Christ for the preservation and perpetual preaching of His doctrine of salvation. He was confronted by a Church, still recognised throughout the whole public life of the nations, which claimed as her own a Divine authority and commission to interpret the written Word of God. She was to the Faithful the lighthouse by which souls struggling in the waves of conflicting opinions might safely steer their course. In submitting his own personal opinion to the solemn judgment of an institution which had stood the test of time since the days of Christ and the Apostles, the Wittenberg Professor had no reason to fear any affront to his dignity. Whoever submitted to the Church accepted her authority as

[1] "Lehrbuch der Dogmengesch," 3[4], 1910, p. 810 f.

supreme, but he did not thereby forfeit either his freedom or his dignity; he obeyed in order not to expose himself to doubt or error; he pledged himself to a higher, and better, wisdom than he was able to reach by his own strength, by the way of experience, error and uncertainty. The Church plainly intimated to the heresiarch the error of his way, pointing out that the freedom of interpretation which he arrogated to himself was the destruction of all sure doctrine, the death-blow to the truth handed down, the tearing asunder of religious union, and the harbinger of endless dissensions.—We here see where Luther's path diverged from that followed by Catholics. He set up subjectivity as a principle, and preached, together with the freedom of interpreting Scripture, the most unfettered revolt against all ecclesiastical authority, which alone can guarantee the truth. The chasm which he cleft still yawns; hence the difference of opinion concerning the sentence pronounced at Worms. We are not at liberty to conceal this fact from ourselves, nor can we wonder at the conflicting judgments passed on the position then assumed by Luther.

We may perhaps be permitted to quote a Protestant opinion which throws some light on Luther's "championship of entire freedom of conscience." It is that of an experienced observer of the struggles of those days, Friedrich Paulsen: "The principle of 1521, viz. to allow no authority on earth to dictate the terms of faith, is anarchical; with it no Church can exist. . . . The starting-point and the justification of the whole Reformation consisted in the complete rejection of all human authority in matters of faith. . . . If, however, a Church is to exist, then the individual must subordinate himself and his belief to the body as a whole. To do this is his duty, for religion can only exist in a body, i.e. in a Church."[1] . . . "Revolution is the term by which the Reformation should be described . . . Luther's work was no Reformation, no 're-forming' of the existing Church by means of her own institutions, but the destruction of the old shape, in fact, the fundamental negation of any Church at all. He refused to admit any earthly authority in matters of faith, and regarding morals his position was practically the same; he left the matter entirely to the individual conscience. . . . Never has the possibility of the existence of any ecclesiastical authority whatsoever been more rudely denied."[2]

"It is true that this is not the whole Luther," he continues. "The same Luther who here advocates ecclesiastical 'anarchy'

[1] "Gesch. des gelehrten Unterrichts vom Ausgang des MA. bis zur Gegenwart," 1², 1896, p. 213 f. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

at a later date was to oppose those whose conscience placed another interpretation on God's Word than that discovered in it by the inhabitants of Wittenberg." Paulsen quotes certain sentences in which Luther, shortly afterwards, denounced all deviations from his teaching: "My cause is God's cause," and "my judgment is God's judgment," and proceeds: "Nothing was left for the Reformers, if there was to be a Church at all, but to set up their own authority in place of the authority of the Popes and the Councils. Only on one tiresome point are they at a disadvantage, anyone being free to appeal from the later Luther to the Luther of Worms." "Just as people are inclined to reject external authority, so they are ready to set up their own. This is one of the roots from which spring the desire for freedom and the thirst for power. It was not at all Luther's way to consider the convictions of others as of equal importance with his own." This he clearly demonstrated in the autocratic position which he claimed for the Wittenberg theology as soon as the "revolutionary era of the Reformation had passed."

"The argument which Luther had employed in 1521 against the Papists, i.e. that it was impossible to confute him from Scripture, he found used against himself in his struggle with the 'fanatics' who also urged that no one could prove them wrong by Scripture. . . . For the confuting of heretics a Rule of faith is necessary, a living one which can decide questions as they arise. . . . One who pins his faith to what Luther did in 1521 might well say: If heretics cannot be confuted from Scripture, this would seem to prove that God does not attach much importance to the confutation of heretics; otherwise He would have given us His Revelation in catechisms and duly balanced propositions instead of in Gospels and Epistles, in Prophets and Psalms. . . . On the one hand there can be no authority on earth in matters of faith, and on the other there must be such an authority, such is the antinomy which lies at the foundation of the Protestant Church. . . . A contradiction exists in the very essence of Protestantism. On the one hand the very idea of a Church postulates oneness of faith manifested by submission; on the other the conviction that if faith in the Protestant sense is to exist at all, then each person must answer for himself; . . . it is *my* faith alone which helps me, and if my faith does not agree with the faith and doctrine of others, I cannot for that reason abandon it. . . . The fact is, there has never been a revolution conducted on entirely logical lines."[1]

That "authority in matters of faith" which Luther began to claim for himself, did not prevent him in the ensuing years from insisting on the right of private judgment, though all the while he was interpreting biblical Revelation in accordance with his own views. As time went on he became, however, much more severe towards the heretics who diverged from his own standpoint. But this was only when the "revolutionary era of

[1] "Gesch. des gelehrten Unterrichts vom Ausgang des MA. bis zur Gegenwart," 1^2, 1896, p. 212 f.

the Reformation," as Paulsen calls it, was over and gone. So long as it lasted he would not and could not openly refuse to others what he claimed for himself. Even in 1525 we find him declaring that "the authorities must not interfere with what each one wishes to teach and to believe, whether it be the Gospel or a lie." He is here speaking of the authorities, but his own conduct in the matter of tolerating heretics was even then highly inconsistent, to say nothing of toleration of Catholics.

From the above it is easy to see that the freedom which Luther advocated at Worms cannot serve as the type of our modern freedom of thought, research and conscience.

To return to the historical consideration of the event at Worms, the words already mentioned, "God help me, Amen!" call for remark.

The celebrated exclamation put into Luther's mouth: "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me, Amen!" usually quoted as the briefest and most characteristic expression of his "exalted, knightly act" at Worms, is a legend which has not even the credit of being incorporated in Luther's Latin account of his speech.

He himself gives the conclusion as simply: "God help me, Amen," a formula which has nothing emphatic about it, was customary at the end of a discourse and is to be found elsewhere in Luther's own writings. Its embellishment by the historic addition was produced at Wittenberg, where it was found desirable to render "the words rather more forcible and high-sounding." "There is not the faintest proof that the amplification came from anyone who actually heard the words."[1] The most that can be said is that it may have grown up elsewhere.[2] The enlarged form is first found in the two editions of the discourse printed by Grüneberg at Wittenberg in 1521, one in Latin and the other in German, which are based as to the remaining portion on notes on the subject emanating from Luther. Karl Müller, the last thoroughly to examine the question, opines that Luther's concluding phrase may very easily have been amplified without the co-operation of Luther or of any actual witness. The proposal made in 1897 in Volume vii. of the Weimar edition of Luther's works to accept as reliable Grüneberg's edition which contains the altered form of the phrase, must, according to Karl Müller, be regarded as "a total failure," nor does he think much

[1] Thus A. Wrede, who, in his edition of the "Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Karl V," 2, p. 555, has dealt anew with the question. Cp. N. Paulus, "Kölnische Volksztg.," 1903, No. 320.

[2] Thus Karl Müller, who treats the subject exhaustively in "Luthers Schlussworte in Worms, 1521," in "Philotesia," dedicated to P. Kleinert, Berlin, 1907, pp. 269, 289. Cp. the review by N. Paulus, "Kölnische Volksztg.," 1908, No. 1000.

better of the Weimar edition in its account of the Worms Acts generally.

How little the exclamation can pretend to any special importance is clear from a note of Conrad Peutinger's, who was present during the address and committed his impression to writing the following day. When Luther had finished his explanation, so it runs, the "official" again exhorted him to retract, seeing he had already been condemned by higher councils. Thereupon Luther retorted that the Councils "had also erred and over and over again contradicted themselves and come into opposition with the Divine Law. This the 'official' denied. Luther insisted that it was so and offered to prove it. This brought the discussion suddenly to an end, and there was a great outcry as Luther left the place. In the midst of it he recommended himself submissively to His Imperial Mt. [Majesty]. Before concluding he uttered the words: May God come to my help." According to this account the words were interjected as Luther was about to leave the assembly, in the midst of the tumult and "great outcry" which followed his recommending himself to the Imperial protection.

In view of the circumstances just described, P. Kalkoff, years ago, admitted that Luther's words as quoted above had "no claim to credibility,"[1] while, quite recently, H. Böhmer declared that "it would be well not to quote any more these most celebrated of Luther's words as though they were his. Many will be sorry, yet the absence of these words need not affect our opinion of Luther's behaviour at Worms."[2] W. Friedensburg is also of opinion that "we must, at any rate, give up the emphatic conclusion of the speech—'Here I stand,' etc.—as unhistorical: the searching examinations made in connection with the Reichstagsakten have rendered it certain that Luther's conclusion was simply: 'God help me, Amen.'" Of this Karl Müller adduced conclusive proofs.[3]

The immense success of the legend of the manly, decisive, closing words so solemnly uttered in the assembly is quite explicable when we come to consider the circumstances. The Diet, an event which stands out in such strong relief in Luther's history, where his friends seemed to see his star rising on the horizon only to set again suddenly behind the mountain fortress, was itself of a nature to invite them to embellish it with fiction.

Apart from the legends in circulation among Luther's friends, there were others which went the rounds among his opponents and later polemics. Such is the statement to the effect that Luther played the coward at Worms, and that his assumed boldness and audacity was merely due to the

[1] "Die Depeschen des Nuntius Aleander vom Wormser Reichstag," 1897, p. 174, n. 2.

[2] "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung²," p. 25.

[3] "Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgesch.," No. 100, p. 26.

promises of material assistance, or, as Thomas Münzer asserts, to actual coercion on the part of his own followers.

According to all we have seen, Luther's chief motive-force was his passionate prepossession in favour of his own ideas. It is true that, especially previous to the Diet, this was alloyed with a certain amount of quite reasonable fear. He himself admits, that when summoned to Worms, he "fell into a tremble" till he determined to bid defiance to the devils there.[1] On his first appearance before the Diet on April 17, he spoke, according to those who heard him, "in an almost inaudible voice," and gave the impression of being a timid man.[2] Later his enthusiasm and his boldness increased with the lively sense of the justice of his cause aided by the applause of sympathisers. There can be no doubt that he was stimulated to confidence not merely by the thought of the thousands who were giving him their moral support, but by the offers of material help he had received, and by his knowledge that the atmosphere of the Diet was charged with electricity. "Counts and Nobles," he himself says later, "looked hard at me; as a result of my sermon, as people in the know think, they lodged in court a charge of 400 Articles [the 'Gravamina'] against the clergy. They [the members of the Diet] had more cause to fear me than I to fear them, for they apprehended a tumult."[3] It was his fiery conviction that he had rediscovered the Gospel and torn away the mask of Antichrist, combined with his assurance of outward support, that inspired him with that "mad courage" of which he was wont to talk even to the end of his life: "I was undismayed and feared nothing; God alone is able to make a man mad after this fashion; I hardly know whether I should be so cheery now."[4]

The unfavourable accounts, circulated from early days among Luther's opponents concerning his mode of life at Worms, must not be allowed to pass unchallenged.

Luther was said to have "distinguished himself by drunkenness," and to have indulged in moral "excesses." Incontrovertible proof would be necessary to allow of our accepting such statements of a time when he was actually under the very eyes of the highest authorities, clerical and lay, and a cynosure of thousands. We should have to ask ourselves how he came to prejudice his judges still further by intemperance and a vicious life. The accounts appealed to do not suffice to establish the charge, consisting as they do of general statements founded partly on the impression made by Luther's appearance, partly on reports circulated by his enemies. That the friends of the

[1] Cp. above, p. 62, n. 2, the quotation from the "Table-Talk."
[2] The Frankfort delegate, in Janssen-Pastor, "Hist. of the German People," Engl. Trans., 3, p. 191
[3] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 474.
[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, pp. 409, 771.

Church were all too ready to believe everything, even the worst, of the morals of so defiant and dangerous a heretic, was only to be expected. The reports were not treated with sufficient discernment even in the official papers, but accepted at their face-value when they suited the purposes of his foes. Luther seemed deficient in the recollection looked for in a religious, though he wore the Augustinian habit; the self-confidence, which he never lost an occasion of displaying, had the appearance of presumption and excessive self-sufficiency; it may also be that the manners which he had inherited from his low-born Saxon parents excited hostile comment among the cultured members of the Diet; if he indulged a little in the good Malvasian wine in which his friends pledged him, this would be regarded by strangers as betraying his German love of the bottle; at the same time it is true that, when starting for Worms, and likewise during the journey, it is reported how, with somewhat unseemly mirth, he had not scrupled to indulge in the juice of the grape, perhaps to dispel sad thoughts.

Caspar Contarini, the Venetian ambassador, who was present at Worms, wrote to Venice: "Martin has scarcely fulfilled the expectations cherished of him here by all. He displays neither a blameless life nor any sort of cleverness. He is quite unversed in learning and has nothing to distinguish him but his impudence."[1] Perhaps the remark concerning Luther's want of culture and wit, on which alone the Venetian here lays stress, was an outcome of Luther's behaviour at his first interrogation; we have already seen how another witness alludes to the nervousness then manifested by him, but over which he ultimately triumphed.[2]

The second authority appealed to, viz. the Nuncio, Hieronymus Aleander, writes more strongly against Luther than does Contarini. It is not however certain that he was an "eye-witness," as he has been termed, at least it is doubtful whether he ever saw Luther while he was in the town, though he describes his appearance, his demeanour and look, as though from personal observation.[3] Aleander speaks much from hearsay, collects impressions and tittle-tattle at haphazard, and enters into no detail, save that he sets on record the "many bowls of Malvasian" which Luther, "being very fond of that wine," drank before his departure from Worms. It is he who wrote to Rome that the Emperor, so soon as he had seen Luther, exclaimed: "This man will never make a heretic of me." Aleander merely adds, that

[1] In the Diary of Marino Sanuto, "R. deputaz. Veneta di Storia Patria," t. 30, Venezia, 1891, 212. At the end of the passage Denifle (in "Luther," 1^2, p. 589, n. 1) proposed that "*impudentiam*" should be read in place of "*imprudentiam*" (i.e. "impudenza" in place of "imprudenza"), as the want of "prudence" had already been blamed. When Contarini speaks of Luther as "assai incontinente," the "incontinence" is that of temper.

[2] Janssen-Pastor, "Hist. of the German People," Engl. Trans., 3, 191.

[3] Cp. Kalkoff, "Depeschen," [2] p. 169, n. 1; p. 172, n. 1.

almost everybody looked on Luther as a stupid, possessed fool; and that it was unnecessary to speak of "the drunkenness to which he was so much addicted, and the many other instances of coarseness in his looks, words, acts, demeanour and gait." By his behaviour he had forfeited all the respect the world had had for him. He describes him as dissolute and a demoniac ("dissoluto, demoniaco").[1] Yet Count Hoyer of Mansfeld, who will be referred to more particularly below, and who blames Luther's moral conduct after his stay at the Wartburg, alleging it as his reason for forsaking his cause, admits that, while at Worms, he, the Count, had been quite Lutheran; hence nothing to the prejudice of Luther's morals can have reached his ears there. In the absence of any further information we may safely assume that it was merely Luther's general behaviour which was rather severely criticised at the great assembly of notables.

A capital opportunity for a closer study of Luther's mind is afforded by his life and doings in the Wartburg.

4. Luther's sojourn at the Wartburg

The solitude of the Wartburg afforded Luther a refuge for almost ten months, to him a lengthy period.

Whereas but a little while before he had been inspirited by the loud applause of his followers and roused by the opposition of those in high places to a struggle which made him utterly oblivious of self, here, in the quiet of the mountain stronghold, the thoughts born of his solitude assailed him in every conceivable form. He was altogether thrown upon himself and his studies. The croaking of the ravens and magpies about the towers in front of his windows sounded like the voices which spoke in the depths of his soul.

Looking back upon his conduct at Worms, he now began to doubt; how, indeed, could an outlaw do otherwise, even had he not undertaken so subversive a venture as Luther? To this was added, in his case, the responsibility for the storm he had let loose on his beloved native land. His own confession runs: "How often did my heart faint for fear, and reproach me thus: You wanted to be wise beyond all others. Are then all others in their countless multitude mistaken? Have so many centuries all been in the wrong? Supposing you were mistaken, and, owing to your mistake,

[1] Passages in Brieger, "Aleander und Luther," 1884, p. 170. Cp. Kalkoff, "Depeschen," p. 170. Balan, "Monumenta reform. Lutheranæ," pp. 109, 205.

were to drag down with you to eternal damnation so many human creatures!"[1]

He must often have asked himself such questions, especially at the beginning of the "hermit life," as he calls it, which he led within those walls. But to these questionings he of set purpose refused to give the right answer; he had set out on the downward path and could not go back; of this he came to convince himself as the result of a lengthy struggle.

This is the point which it is incumbent on the psychologist to study beyond all else. Luther's everyday life and his studies at Worms have been discussed often enough already.

It is unheard of, so he says in the accounts he gives of his interior struggles in those days, "to run counter to the custom of so many centuries and to oppose the convictions of innumerable men and such great authorities. How can anyone turn a deaf ear to these reproaches, insults and condemnations?" "How hard is it," he exclaims from his own experience, "to come to terms with one's own conscience when it has long been accustomed to a certain usage [like that of the Papists], which is nevertheless wrong and godless. Even with the plainest words from Holy Scripture I was scarcely able so to fortify my conscience as to venture to challenge the Pope, and to look on him as Antichrist, on the bishops as the Apostles of Antichrist and the Universities as his dens of iniquity!" He summoned all his spirit of defiance to his aid and came off victorious. "Christ at length strengthened me by His words, which are steadfast and true. No longer does my heart tremble and waver, but mocks at the Popish objections; I am in a haven of safety and laugh at the storms which rage without."[2]

From the Catholic point of view, what he had done was violently to suppress the higher voice which had spoken to him in his solitude. Yet this voice was again to make itself heard, and with greater force than ever.

Luther had then succeeded so well in silencing it that he was able to write to his friends, as it seems, without the slightest scruple, that, as to Worms, he was only ashamed of not having spoken more bravely and emphatically before the whole Empire; were he compelled to appear there again, they would hear a very different tale of him. "I desire nothing more ardently than to bare my breast to the attacks of my adversaries." He spent his whole time in picturing to himself "the empire of Antichrist," a frightful vision of the wrath of God.[3] With such pictures he

[1] Preface to the tract, "On the abuse of the Mass," indited as a letter to the Wittenberg Augustinians, Latin Works, Weim. ed., 8, p. 411 *seq.* "Opp. Lat. var.," 6, p. 116. Cp. "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 243.

[2] In the Latin text, *ibid.*, p. 412=116.

[3] To Melanchthon, May 12, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 148.

spurs himself on, and encourages Melanchthon, with whose assistance he was unable to dispense, to overcome his timidity and vacillation. In many of his letters from the Wartburg he exhorts his friends to courage and confidence, being anxious to counteract by every possible effort the ill-effects of his absence. In these letters his language is, as a rule, permeated by a fanatical and, at times, mystical tone, even more so than any of his previous utterances. He exhibits even less restraint than formerly in his polemics. "Unless a man scolds, bites and taunts, he achieves nothing. If we admonish the Popes respectfully, they take it for flattery and fancy they have a right to remain unreformed. But Jeremias exhorts me, and says to me: 'Cursed be he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully' (xlviii. 10), and calls for the use of the sword against the enemies of God."[1]

Two phenomena which accompanied this frenzy render it still graver in the eyes of an onlooker. These were, on the one hand, certain occurrences which bordered on hallucination, and, on the other, frightful assaults of the tempter.

Concerning both, his letters of that time, and likewise his own accounts at a later date, supply us with definite information. It is, indeed, a dark page on which they direct our attention. All the circumstances must carefully be borne in mind. First, much must be attributed to the influence of his new and unaccustomed place of abode and the strange nature of his surroundings. His gloomy meditations and enforced leisure; a more generous diet, which, in comparison with his former circumstances, meant to the Monk, now metamorphosed into "Squire George," an almost luxurious mode of living; finally, bodily discomfort, for instance, the constipation to which he frequently refers as troubling him,[2] all this tended to develop an abnormal condition of soul to which his former psychological states of terror may also have contributed. He fancied, and all his life maintained, that in the Wartburg he had suffered bodily assaults of the devil.

Luther believed that he had not only heard the devil tormenting him by day, and more particularly by night, with divers dreadful noises, but that he had seen him in his room under the form of a huge black dog, and had chased him away by prayer. His statements, to which we shall return in detail in another connection (vol. vi., xxxvi. 3; cp. vol. v., xxxi. 4), are such as presuppose, at the very

[1] To Spalatin, September 9, 1521, *ibid.*, p. 229.

[2] Cp. letter to Melanchthon of May 12, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3 p. 149.

least, the strangest illusions. Some have even opined that he suffered from real hallucinations of hearing and sight, though they have adduced no definite proof of such. The disputes with the devil, of which he speaks, are certainly nothing more than a rhetorical version of his own self-communings.

If Luther brought with him to the Wartburg a large stock of popular superstition, he increased it yet more within those dreary walls, thanks to the sensitiveness of his lively imagination, until he himself became the plaything of his fancy. "Because he was so lonely," writes his friend the physician Ratzeberger, on the strength of Luther's personal communication, "he was beset with ghosts and noisy spirits which gave him much concern." And after quoting the tale of the dog he goes on: "Such-like and many other ghosts came to him at that time, all of which he drove away by prayer, and which he would not talk about, for he said he would never tell anyone by how many different kinds of ghosts he had been molested."[1]

The temptations of the flesh which he then experienced Luther also attributed, in the main, to the devil. They fell upon him with greater force than ever before. Their strength displeased him, according to his letters, and he sought to resist them, though it is plain from his words that he realised the utter futility of his desire to rid himself of them. In this state of darkness he directed his thoughts more vigorously than heretofore to the question of monastic vows and their binding power. He seems to be clanking the chains by which he had by his own vow freely pledged himself to the Almighty.

In July, 1521, in a letter from the Wartburg to his friend Melanchthon, while repudiating, in the somewhat bombastic fashion of the Humanists, Melanchthon's praise, he makes the following confession: "Your good opinion of me shames and tortures me. For I sit here [instead of working for God's cause as you fondly imagine] hardened in immobility, praying, unhappily, too little instead of sighing over the Church of God; nay, I burn with the flames of my untamed flesh; in short, I ought to be glowing in the spirit, and instead I glow in the flesh, in lust, laziness, idleness and drowsiness, and know not whether God has not turned away His face from me because you have ceased to pray for me. You, who are more rich in the gifts of God than I, are now holding my place. For a whole week I have neither written, prayed nor studied, plagued partly by temptations of the flesh, partly by the other trouble." The other trouble was

[1] Ratzeberger, "Gesch.," ed. Neudecker, p. 54.

the painful bodily ailment mentioned above, to which he returns here in greater detail. "Pray for me," he concludes this letter—in which he seeks to confirm his friends in the course upon which they had set out,—"pray, for in this solitude I am sinking into sin."[1] And in another letter, in December, we again have an allusion to his besetting temptations: "I am healthy in body and am well cared for, but I am also severely tried by sin and temptations. Pray for me, and fare you well."[2] He here speaks of sins *and* temptations, but it may well be that under "sins" he here, as elsewhere, comprehends concupiscence, which he, in accordance with his teaching, looked upon as sin.

"Believe me," he says in a letter of that time to Nicholas Gerbel of Strasburg, "in the quiet of my hermitage I am exposed to the attacks of a thousand devils. It is far easier to fight against men, who are devils incarnate, than against the 'spirits of wickedness dwelling in high places' (Eph. vi. 12). I fall frequently, but the right hand of the Lord again raises me up."[3]

The distaste which was growing up within him for the vow of chastity which he had once esteemed so highly, did not appear to him to come from the devil, for he congratulates the same friend that he has forsaken the "unclean and in its nature damnable state of celibacy," in order to enter the "married state ordained by God." "I consider the married state a true Paradise, even though the married couple should live in the greatest indigence." At the same time he privately informs Gerbel, that, with the co-operation of Melanchthon, he has already started "a powerful conspiracy with the object of setting aside the vows of the clergy and religious." He is here alluding to the tract he was then writing "On Monastic Vows." "The womb is fruitful, and is soon due to bring forth; if Christ wills it will give birth to a child [the tract in question], which shall break in pieces with a rod of iron (Apoc. xii. 5) the Papists, sophists, religiosists [defenders of religious Orders] and Herodians." "O how criminal is Antichrist, seeing that Satan by his means has laid waste all the mysteries of Christian piety. . . . I daily see so much that is dreadful in the wretched celibacy of young men and women that nothing sounds more evil in my ears than the words nun, monk and priest."[4]

Hence, at the beginning of November, 1521, when he was engaged on the momentous work "On Monastic Vows," he believed he had found decisive biblical arguments against the state of chastity and continence, recommended though it had been by Christ and His Apostles.

Previously the case had been different, when Carlstadt

[1] On July 13, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 189.
[2] To his intimate friend Johann Lang, December 18, 1521, *ibid.*, p. 256.
[3] On November 1, 1521, *ibid.*, p. 240.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

and others first began to boggle at vows; Luther was then still undecided, seeking for ostensibly theological arguments with which to demolish the difficulty. At that time he had been troubled by such plain biblical words as those of the Psalmist, "Vow ye and pray to the Lord your God" (Ps. lxxv. 12). Even in August, 1521, he had confided his scruples to Spalatin from the Wartburg: "What can be more perilous than to invite so large a number of unmarried persons to enter into matrimony on the strength of a few passages of doubtful meaning? The consequence will only be that consciences will be still more troubled than they are at present. I, too, would fain see celibacy made optional, as the Gospel wills, but I do not yet see my way to proving this."[1] We likewise find him criticising rather unkindly Melanchthon's reasons, because they took a wrong way to a goal after which he was himself ardently striving, viz. the setting aside of the vow of celibacy. He was suffering, he admits, "grievous pain through being unable to find the right answer to the question."[2]

Such efforts were naturally crowned with success in the end.

Five weeks later he was able to inform Melanchthon: "It seems to me that now I can say with confidence how our task is to be accomplished. The argument is briefly this: Whoever has taken a vow in a spirit opposed to evangelical freedom must be set free and his vow be anathema. Such, however, are all those who have taken the vow in the search for salvation, or justification. Since the greater number of those taking vows make them for this reason, it is clear that their vow is godless, sacrilegious, contrary to the Gospel and hence to be dissolved and laid under a curse."[3]

Thus it was the indefinite and elastic idea of "evangelical freedom" which was finally to settle the question. Concerning his own frame of mind while working out this idea in his tract, he says to Spalatin, on November 11, in a letter of complaint about other matters: "I am going to make war

[1] On August 15, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 218.

[2] On August 3, 1521, *ibid.*, p. 213. The above is the real translation of the words made use of, "*quantis urgear æstibus*," according to the context.

[3] On September 9, 1521, *ibid.*, 3, p. 224.

against religious vows. . . . I am suffering from temptations, and out of temper, so don't be offended. There is more than one Satan contending with me; I am alone, and yet at times not alone."[1]

The book was finished in November and sent out under the title, "On Monastic Vows."[2] The same strange argument, based on evangelical freedom, recurs therein again and again under all sorts of rhetorical forms; the tract is also noteworthy for its distortion of the Church's teaching,[3] though we cannot here enter in detail into its theology and misstatements. The very origin of the book does not inspire confidence. Many great and monumental historical works and events have originated in conditions far from blameless, but few of Luther's writings have sprung from so base a source as this one; yet its results were far-reaching, and it was a means of seducing countless wavering and careless religious, depleting the monasteries and furthering immensely the new evangelical teaching. While writing the book Luther had naturally in his mind the multitude he was so desirous of setting free, and chose his language accordingly.

[1] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 247.

[2] The Latin work will be found in Weim. ed., 8, p. 564 ff.; in Erl. ed., "Opp. Lat. var.," 6, p. 234 *seq.* The MS. was sent to Spalatin on November 22, and was published at the end of February, 1522. Denifle has carefully analysed the contents and pointed out the fallacies contained in the book and certain other things not at all to Luther's credit. See "Luther und Lutherthum," 1², pp. 29, 348. Cp. N. Paulus, "Zu Luthers Schrift über die Mönchsgelübde" ("Hist. Jahrb.," 27, 1906, pp. 487, 517), an article rich in matter, called forth by O. Scheel's attack on Denifle. Paulus therein shows once more that Luther was wrong in ascribing to the Church the teaching that perfection is to be attained only in the religious state, and by the observance of vows (cp. present work, vol. iv., xxiv. 4), or in claiming that the Church has a "twofold ideal of life," and conception of religion, a lower one for the laity and a higher one for religious (p. 496 ff.). He proves, at length, the falsehood of the view cherished among Protestants, in spite of Denifle's refutation, that all, or nearly all, entered the religious life in order to obtain justification (p. 506 ff), and fully explains the late mediæval expression which compares religious profession to Baptism (p. 510 ff.).

[3] Caspar Schatzgeyer, in a polemic against Luther wrote: "One is almost tempted to think that this book, so brimful of ire, was written by a drunken man, or by the infernal spirit himself" ("Replica" [sine loc. et an.], Augsburg, 1522, fol. E1). The opinion of the Paris theologian, Jodocus Clichtoveus ("Antilutherus," Parisiis, 1524, fol. 124′), was very similar. As for Johann Dietenberger, he declared that the book bristled with lies, calumnies, and insults ("De votis monasticis," lib. secundus, Colon., 1524, fol. T5′).

But what were his thoughts concerning himself at that period, when the idea of matrimony had not yet dawned upon him?

In the letter to Melanchthon just referred to, he says of himself: "If I had had the above argument [concerning evangelical freedom] before my eyes when I made my vow, I should never have taken it. I too am, therefore, uncertain as to the frame of mind in which I did take it; I was rather carried away than drawn, such was God's will; I fear that I too made a godless and sacrilegious vow. . . . Later, when the vows were made, my earthly father, who was angry about it all, said to me when he had calmed down: 'If only it was not a snare of Satan!' His words made such an impression on me that I remember them better than anything else he ever said, and I believe that through his mouth God spoke to me, at a late hour indeed, and as from afar, to rebuke and warn me."[1]

Very closely connected with his own development is the fact that at that time, on several occasions, he described most glaringly and untruthfully the moral corruption in which the Papists were sunk, owing to the vow of chastity and the state of celibacy. It seems to have been his way of quieting his conscience. So greatly does he generalise concerning the evil which he attributes with much exaggeration to his fellows in the religious state, representing it as an inevitable result of monastic life, that, strange to say, he forgets to except himself. Only at a much later date did he casually inform his hearers that, through God's dispensation, he had preserved his chastity.[2]

As to whether he himself had any intention then of dissolving his vow by marriage, we may put on record what he had said at an earlier date in a written sermon intended for the general public: "I hope I have got so far that, with God's grace, I may remain as I am," but he adds: "though I am not yet out of the wood and dare not compare myself to the chaste hearts, still I should be sorry and pray God graciously to preserve me from it."[3] The "chaste hearts" are the "false saints" whom he is assailing in that particular section of his sermon. To the "false saints" he opposes the true ones, much as in his earliest sermons at Wittenberg he had attacked the stricter monks and their observance, describing them opprobriously as little saints and proud self-righteous by works. The connecting link between the two, i.e. his erroneous opposition to all good works and renunciation of sensuality, here, and again and again elsewhere, is clearly Luther's starting-point.

He fancies he hears those who were desirous of faithfully keeping the vow they had made to God reproaching him with

[1] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 225.

[2] Sermon of 1537, "Werke," Erl. ed., 44, p. 148: "I have myself had it [the gift of chastity], although with many evil thoughts and dreams."

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 708; Erl. 10^2, p. 464.

his sensuality, "how they open their jaws," and say, "alas, poor monk, how he must feel the weight of his cowl, how pleased he would be to have a wife! But let them blaspheme," such is his answer, one typical of his language on the subject, "let them blaspheme, these chaste hearts and great saints, let them be of iron and stone as they feign to be; but as for you, beware of forgetting that you are a man of flesh and blood; leave it to God to judge between the angelical and mighty heroes and the despised and feeble sinners. If you only knew who they are who make a show of such great chastity and discipline, and what that is of which St. Paul speaks, Ephesians v. 12: 'For of the things that are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak,' you would not esteem their boasted chastity fit even for a prostitute to wipe her boots on. Here we have the perversion that the chaste are the unchaste and deceive all that come in contact with them."[1]

Yet the pious religious who were true to their vows would certainly have been the last to deny that they were mere flesh and blood; they did not pretend to be made of "iron," nor did they vaunt their "boasted chastity," but prayed to God, did humble penance, and so acquired the grace necessary for keeping what they had cheerfully vowed in the fear of the Lord and in the consoling hope of an eternal reward. On the other hand, we hear but little of Luther's praying in the Wartburg, and still less of his having performed penance. And yet those walls were full of the memory of that great Saint, Elizabeth of Hungary, whose life was a touching example of zealous prayer and penance.

Luther, during his stay in the Castle, accused himself in very strong terms, which, however, he did not intend to be taken literally, of gluttony and luxurious living, and also of idleness. "I sit here all day in idleness and fill my belly," he says in hyperbolical language on May 14, 1521, in a letter to Spalatin,[2] soon after his arrival at the Wartburg. Already before this, at Wittenberg, in a letter to Staupitz, he had reproached himself with drunkenness.[3]

If, however, the "luxury" with which he reproached himself was no graver than his "idleness," then Luther is not really in such a bad case, for his "idleness" was so little meant to be taken literally, that, in the same letter, he immediately goes on to speak of his literary projects: "I am about to write a German sermon on the freedom of auricular confession [this duly appeared and was dedicated to Sickingen]; I also intend to continue the Commentary on the Psalms [a plan never realised]; also my postils as soon as I have received what I require from Wittenberg [the German postil alone was published]; I am also awaiting the unfinished MS. of the Magnificat [this also was published later]."

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 708; Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 464.

[2] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 154: "*Otiosus et crapulosus.*"

[3] On February 20, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 431: "*Homo expositus crapulæ.*"

It was not in his nature to be really idle.

His chief German work, which was to render him so popular, viz. his translation of the Bible, was commenced in the Wartburg, where he started with the translation of the New Testament from the Greek. We shall speak elsewhere of the merits and defects of this translation. The general excellence of its style and language cannot hide the theological bias which frequently guides the writer's pen, nor can its value as a popular work allow us to overlook the fact that he was often carried away by the precipitation incidental to his temperament.[1]

Another work which he finished within those quiet walls treated of the Sacrifice of the Mass. His thoughts early turned with aversion from this centre of Catholic worship; indeed, he seemed bent on robbing the Church of the very pearl of her worship. He appears to have said Mass for the last time on his way to Augsburg to meet Cardinal Cajetan. In the Wartburg he refused to have anything to do with the "Mass priest" living there. On August 1, 1521, he wrote to Melanchthon, that the renewal of Christ's institution of the celebration of the Supper, proposed by his friends at Wittenberg, agreed entirely with the plans he had in view when he should return, and that from that time forward he would never again say a private Mass.[2]

The work just mentioned, which appeared in 1522, is entitled, "On the Abuse of the Mass." He dedicated it in the Preface "to the Augustinians of Wittenberg," his dear brethren, because he had heard in his solitude, so he says, "that they had been the first to commence setting aside the abuse of Masses in their assembly [congregation]."[3] He is desirous of fortifying their "consciences" against the Mass, because he is anxious lest "all should not have the same constancy, and good conscience, in the undertaking of so great and notable a work." In the same way as he in his struggle had attained to assurance of conscience, so they, too, must act "with a like conscience, faith and

[1] Cp. Paul de Lagarde, "Mitteilungen," 3, Göttingen, 1889, p. 336.

[2] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 208. Cp. K. Müller, "Luther und Karlstadt," 1907, p. 5 ff.

[3] Dedication of the German edition, 1522. "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 482; Erl. ed., 53, p. 93. The work in Latin in "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 398 ff. German, *ibid.*, p. 477 ff, and in Erl. ed., 28, p. 28. The German dedication agrees with the Latin. See above, p. 80, n. 1.

trust, and look on the opinion of the whole world as nothing but chaff and straw, knowing that we are sent to a death-struggle against the devil and all his might, yea, against the judgment of God, and, like Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 28), can only overcome by our strength of faith."

To despise the protests of the world was not so difficult, but to pay "no heed to the devil and the solemn judgment of God" was a harder task.

It would seem that some of the Augustinians were not capable of this, and had become uneasy concerning the innovations. He is thereupon at pains to assure them that he is an expert in the matter; he declares that he has learnt from experience how "our conscience makes us out to be sinners in God's sight and deserving of eternal reprobation, unless it is well preserved and protected at every point by the holy, strong and veracious Word of God."[1] This "stronghold" he would fain open to them by demonstrating from the Word of God the horrors of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Hence he begins by overthrowing, with incredible determination, everything that might be advanced against him and in favour of the Mass in general by the "doctrine and discipline of the Church, the teaching of the Fathers, immemorial custom and usage," commandments of men and theological faculties, Saints, Fathers, or, in fine, the "Pope and his Gomorrhas." The utter unrestraint of his language here and there is only matched by the extravagance of his ideas and interpretation of the Bible.

All men are priests, he declares; as to Mass priests there should be none. "I defy the idols and pomps of this world, the Pope and his parsons. You fine priestlings, can you point out to us in all the gospels and epistles a single bit of proof that you are or were intended to act as priests for other Christians?"[2] Whoever dares to adduce the well-known passages in the Bible to the contrary he looks on as a "rude, unlettered donkey." Why? Because he would not otherwise defend the "smeared and shorn priesthood." "O worthy patron of the shaven, oily little gods," he says to him with mocking commiseration.[3] We are the persecuted party, we, who, whilst acknowledging Christ's presence in the Sacrament, will have nothing to do with the sacrificial character of the Supper. For whoever holds fast simply to Christ's institution is scolded as a heretic by the Pope. "There they sit, the unlettered, godless hippopotami, on costly, royal thrones, Pope, Cardinal, bishop, monk and parson with their schools of Paris and Louvain, and their dear sisters Sodom and

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., p. 483; Erl. ed., 28, p. 30.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 488=36. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 488 f.=37 f.

Gomorrha." As soon as they see the poor, small, despised crew [the opponents of the Mass] they wax wroth, "frown, turn up their noses, hold up their hands in horror, and cry: 'The heretics do not observe the usage and form of the Roman Church'"; but they themselves are "unlearned dunces and donkeys."[1]

The author, whose very pen seems steeped in ire, goes off at a tangent to speak of the Pope and of celibacy.

He is never tired of explaining "that the abominable and horrid priesthood of the Papists came into the world from the devil"; "the Pope is a true apostle of his master the hellish fiend, according to whose will he lives and reigns"; he has dropped into the holy kingdom of the priesthood common to all like the "devil's hog he is, and with his snout" has befouled, yea, destroyed it; with his celibacy he has raised up a priesthood which is "a brew of all abominations."[2] The devil himself does not suffice to make Luther's language strong enough for his liking, and he is driven to his imagination for other ugly pictures.

"I believe, that, even had the Pope made fornication obligatory, he would not have given rise to and furthered such great unchastity [as by celibacy]." "Who can sufficiently deplore the fury of the devil with his godless, cursed law?" The "Roman knave" wishes to rule everywhere, and the "universities, those shameless brothels, sit still and say nothing. . . . They, like obedient children of the Church, carry out the commands of the whoremaster. Every Christian ought to resist him at the risk of his life, even though he had a thousand heads, because we see how the poor, simple, common folk who stand in terror of his childish, shameful Bulls, do, and submit to, whatever the damned Roman rogue invents with the help of the devil."[3]

Many of his contemporaries may well be excused for having felt that such language was the result of the Pope's Bull; the curse of the Church had overtaken Luther, in the solitude of the Wartburg it had done its work, and now the spirit of evil and darkness had gained complete mastery.[4]

"So great," he cries, "is God's anger over this vale of Tafet and Hinnan that those who are most learned, and live most chastely, do more harm than those who learn nothing and live in fornication." "O unhappy wretches that we are, who live in these latter days among so many Baalites, Bethelites and Molochites, who all appear so spiritual and Christian, and yet have swallowed up the whole world and themselves desire to be the only Church; they live and laugh in their security and freedom, instead of weeping tears of blood over the cruel murder of the children of our people."[5]

In conclusion, he gives his open approval to the Wittenbergers, that "Mass is no longer said, that there is no more organ-playing," and that "bleating and bellowing" has ceased in the Church,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., p. 510=68.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 538, 539, 540=106, 107, 109.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 549=121.
[4] Cp. volume iv., xxvii.
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, pp. 559, 560; Erl. ed., 28, pp. 135, 137.

so that the Papists say: "They are all heretics and have gone crazy."[1] It seems to him that Saxony is the happiest of lands, "because there the living truth of the Gospel has arisen"; surely the Elector Frederick must be the Prince, foretold by prophecy, who was to deliver the Holy Sepulchre; himself he compares to the "Angel at the Sepulchre," or to Magdalene who announced the Resurrection.[2]

His self-confidence and arrogance had not been shaken by the many weary hours of lonely introspection in the Wartburg, but, on the contrary, had been nourished and inflamed. That was the period of his "spiritual baptism"; he felt volcanic forces surging up within him. He believed that a power from above had commanded him to teach as he was doing. Hence he called the Wartburg his Patmos; as the Apostle John had received his revelation on Patmos, so, as he thought, he also had been favoured in his seclusion with mysterious communications from above.

The idea of a divine commission now began to penetrate all his being with overwhelming force.

When the ecclesiastical troubles at Wittenberg necessitated his permanent return thither, he declared to the Elector, who had hitherto never heard such language from his lips, "Your Electoral Grace is already aware, or, if unaware, is hereby apprised of the fact, that I have not received the Gospel from man, but from heaven only, through Our Lord Jesus Christ, so that I might already have accounted myself and signed myself a servant and evangelist, and for the future shall do so."[3] We must also refer to the days of his Saxon Patmos—which exercised so deep an influence on his interior life—the remarkable mystical utterance to which his pupils afterwards declared he had given vent at a later date, viz. that he had been "commanded," nay, "enjoined under pain of eternal reprobation ('*interminaretur*') not to doubt in any way of these things [of the doctrines he was to teach]."[4]

Every road that led back to his duty to the Church and his Order was barred by the gloomy enthusiasm Luther kindled within himself, subsequently to his spiritual baptism in the Wartburg.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 561=138. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 562=139 f.
[3] On March 5, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 106 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 296).
[4] In Lauterbach's "Tagebuch," p. 62, n. (from Khummer's Notes).

The time spent in the Wartburg brought him his final conviction in his calling as a prophet and his divine commission, but if we are to understand Luther aright we must not forget that this conviction was a matter of gradual growth (cp. vol. iii., xvi. 1).

We cannot doubt that even in the first years of his public career, certainly in 1519 and 1520, the belief in his own divine mission had begun to take firm root in his mind.

In order to explain the rise of this idea we must turn first of all to his confidential letters dating from this period; his public writings in this respect are of less importance. With their help it is possible to recognise to some extent the course of this remarkable psychological development. So soon as he had perceived that his discovery, of the worthlessness of good works, and of justification by faith alone, was in permanent contradiction to the teaching of the Roman Church, the presentiment necessarily began to awaken within him, that the whole body of the faithful had been led by Rome into the greatest darkness. He fancied himself fortified in this idea by the sight of the real abuses which had overspread the whole life of the Church in his time. He thought he descried a universal corruption which had penetrated down to the very root of ecclesiasticism, and he did not scruple to say so in his earliest sermons and lectures. He felt it his duty to bewail the falling away. In the hours in which he gave free play to his fancy, it even seemed to him that Christ and the Gospel had almost disappeared.

The applause which greeted the appearance of his first writings, and which he eagerly accepted, confirmed him in his belief that he had made a most far-reaching discovery. He lacked the sense and discrimination which might have enabled him to see the too great importance he was ascribing to his invention. He says in May, 1518, to an elderly friend who opposed his views: My followers, prelates of the Church and scholarly men of the world, all rightly admit, that "formerly they had heard nothing of Christ and the Gospel." "To put it briefly, I am convinced that no reform of the Church is possible unless the ecclesiastical dogmas, the decisions of the Popes, the theology of the schools, philosophy and logic as they exist at present are completely altered. . . . I fear no man's contradiction

when defending such a thesis."[1] In the same year, in March, he wrote to a friendly ecclesiastic, that the theologians who had hitherto occupied the professorial chairs, viz. the schoolmen, did not understand the Gospel and the Bible one bit. "To quibble about the meaning of words is not to interpret the Gospel. All the Professors, Universities and Doctors are nothing but shadows whom you have no cause to be afraid of."[2]

If he wished to proceed further—and we know how he allowed himself to be carried away—he could not do otherwise than assume to himself the dignity of a divinely appointed teacher. No one save a prophet could dare condemn the whole of the past in the way he was doing.

During the excitement incidental to periods of transition such as Luther's, belief in a supernatural calling was no rare thing. Those who felt within themselves unusual powers and wished to assume the command of the movements of the day not unfrequently laid claim to a divine mission. Not only fanatics from the ranks of the Anabaptists, but worldly minded men, such as Hutten and Sickingen, dreamt, in Luther's day, of great enterprises for which they had been chosen. In short, there were only two courses open to Luther, either to draw back when it was seen that the Church remained resolutely opposed to him, or to vindicate his assaults by representing himself as a messenger sent by God. Luther was not slow to adopt the latter course. The idea to him was no mere passing fancy, but took firm root in his mind. He assured his friends that he was daily receiving new light from God in this matter through the study of the Scripture.

It was under the influence of this persuasion that, in January, 1518, he wrote the following remarkable words to Spalatin: "To those who are desirous of working for the glory of God, an insight into the written Word of God is given from above, in answer to their prayers; this I have experienced" ("*experto crede ista*"); he says that the action of the Holy Ghost may be relied on, and urges others

[1] To Jodocus Trutfetter, Professor at Erfurt, May 9, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 188: "*Uno ore dicunt, sese prius non novisse nec audivisse Christum et Evangelium,*" etc.

[2] To Sylvius Egranus, preacher at Zwickau, March 24, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 173.

to do as he has done.[1] It would also appear, that, believing firmly that he was under the "influence of the Holy Ghost," he, for a while, cherished the illusion that the Church would gradually come over to his teaching. When at length he was forced to recognise that the ecclesiastical authorities were, on the contrary, determined to check him, he decided to throw overboard all the preceding ages and the whole authority of the Church. As a natural consequence he then proceeded to reform the old and true idea of the Church. The preserving and proclaiming of the faith is committed to no external teaching office instituted by Christ, such was his teaching, but simply to the illumination of the Spirit; each one is led by this interior guide; it is the Spirit who is directing me in the struggle just commenced and who, through me, will bring back to the world the Gospel which has so long lain hidden under rubbish.

5. Wartburg Legends

Luther's adversaries have frequently taken the statements contained in the letters of the lonely inmate of the castle[2] concerning his carnal temptations, and his indulgence in eating and drinking ("*crapula*"), rather too unfavourably, as though he had been referring to real, wilful sin rather than to mere temptation, and as though Luther was not exaggerating in his usual vein when he speaks of his attention to the pleasures of the table. At least no proof is forthcoming in favour of this hostile interpretation.

On the other hand, the attempts constantly made by Luther's supporters to explain away the sensual lusts from which he tells us he suffered there, and likewise the enticements ("*titillationes*") which he had admitted even previously to Staupitz his Superior, as nothing more than worldliness, inordinate love of what is transitory, and temptations to self-seeking, are certainly somewhat strange. Why, we may ask, make such futile efforts?[3] Is it in order

[1] To Spalatin, January 18, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 142.

[2] See vol. i., p. 369, n. 1.

[3] "*Carnis meæ indomitæ uror magnis ignibus,*" in the letter to Melanchthon, July 13, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 189, where he also employs the expression, "*tentationes carnis.*" In a letter to Staupitz, February 20, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 431: "*Homo sum expositus et involutus societati, crapulæ, titillationi, negligentiæ aliisque molestiis.*" "*Titillatio*" is generally used by Luther for

to counteract the exaggerations of Luther's opponents, who, in popular works, have recently gone so far as, in all good faith, to declare the "trouble" ("*molestiæ*") of which Luther complained in his correspondence at that time, was the result of disease arising from the sins of his youth, though, from the context, it is clear that the "trouble" in question was simply a prosaic attack of constipation.[1]

Luther related later, according to the "Table-Talk,"[2] how the wife of "Hans von Berlips [Berlepsch, the warden of the Wartburg] coming to Eisenach," and "scenting" that he (Luther) was in the Castle, would have liked to see him; but as this was not permitted he had been taken to another room, while she was lodged in his. Luther mentions this when alluding to the annoyance from which he complains he suffered owing to the noisy ghosts of the Wartburg, whom he took for devils. Two pages, who brought him food and drink twice a day, were the only human beings allowed to visit him. He relates that during the night she spent in his room this woman was likewise disturbed by ghosts: "All that night there was such a to-do in the room that she thought a thousand devils were in it." The fact is that Berlepsch, the Warden of the Castle, was not then married, wedding Beata von Ebeleben only in 1523.[3] Hence we have here either an anachronism when the visitor to the Wartburg is spoken of as being already his wife, or a case of mistaken identity. Luther speaks of the visit quite simply. The woman's object in calling at the Castle may very well have been to gratify her feminine curiosity by a sight of Luther, and to pay a visit to the Warden. The supposition that the slightest misconduct took place between Luther and the visitor can only be classed in the category of the fictitious.

The mention of the diabolical spectres infesting the

sensual temptation, e.g. in the Commentary on Romans ("Schol. Rom.," p. 133): "*Luxuriosus, dum titillatio venit,*" etc.; also in the tract on the Ten Commandments, "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, pp. 485, 491, 497. In the German version he translates the word by "Kitzel"; see, for instance, "Werke," Erl. ed., 34, p. 139.

[1] See references below, xiii. 4. The "*molestiæ*" in the passage from the letter to Staupitz (see previous note) are probably of the same character.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 341.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, 440, 773.

Wartburg calls to mind the famous ink-stain on one of the walls of the Castle.

The tradition is that it was caused by Luther hurling his inkpot at the devil, who was disputing with him. The tradition is, however, a legend which probably had its origin in a murky splash on the wall. In Köstlin and Kawerau's new biography of Luther this has already been pointed out, and the fact recalled that in 1712 Peter the Great was shown a similar stain in Luther's room at Wittenberg, not in the Wartburg, and that Johann Salomo Semler, a well-known Protestant writer, in his Autobiography published in 1781, mentions a like stain in the fortress of Coburg where Luther had tarried.[1]

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, 440, 773

CHAPTER XIII

THE RISE OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES

1. Against the Fanatics. Congregational Churches?

LUTHER quitted the Wartburg March 1, 1522, after having previously paid a secret visit to Wittenberg between December 3 and 11. He now made his appearance at the birthplace of the Evangel in order to recommence his vigorous and incisive sermons, which had become imperatively necessary for his cause.

The action of Carlstadt, even more than that of the "Prophets of the Kingdom of God," who had come over from Zwickau, called for his presence in order that he might resist their attacks. In his absence the Mass had already been forcibly abolished, sermons had been preached against confession and infant baptism, and the destruction of the images had commenced. Like Luther himself, those who incited the people to these proceedings, appealed on the one hand to the plain testimony of Holy Scripture as the source of their inspiration, and on the other to direct illumination from above.

Infant baptism, argued the Zwickauers, was not taught in Holy Scripture, but was opposed to the actual words of the Saviour: "He that believes and is baptised." The "prophets" met, however, with little encouragement. Carlstadt had not yet taken their side either in this matter or in their pseudo-mysticism.

Against the Elector, Carlstadt, however, appealed expressly, as Luther had done, to his duty of proclaiming the understanding of the Bible which he had been granted.

"Woe to me," he cried with the Apostle St. Paul, "if I do not preach" (1 Cor. ix. 16). He declared that the diversions arose merely from the fact that all did not follow Holy Scripture; but he, at least, obeyed it and death itself

would not shift him from this firm foundation; he would remain "firmly grounded on the Word of God." In demanding the removal of the images he cried: "God's voice says briefly and clearly in Scripture: 'Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them'; and hence it is useless to argue: 'I do not worship the images, I do not honour them for their own sake, but on account of the Saints whom they represent.'"

Carlstadt, it is true, also suggested that it was for "the supreme secular power to decree and effect the removal of the abuse."[1] When occasion arose he also advised "proceeding without causing a tumult and without giving the foes cause for calumny." That was his advice,[2] but most of those who thought as he did were little disposed to wait until the authorities, or the "priests of Baal themselves, removed their vessels and idols."

The first step towards liturgical change in Wittenberg was, however, taken by Melanchthon when, September 29, 1521, he and his pupils received the Sacrament in the Parish Church, the words of institution being spoken aloud and the cup being passed to the laity, because Christ had so ordained it. A few days later the Augustinians, particularly Gabriel Zwilling, commenced active steps against the Mass as a sacrifice, ceasing to say it any longer. Melanchthon and the Augustinians knew that in this they had Luther's sympathy. As those who agreed with Luther followed Melanchthon's example concerning the Mass and the Supper, and ceased to take any part in the Catholic Mass, introducing preachers of their own instead, a new order of Divine worship was soon the result. "Alongside of the congregation with the old Popish rites rose the new evangelical community."[3] But here Carlstadt stepped forward and gave a new turn to events; he was determined not to see the followers of the Gospel left in a corner, and without delay he set about altering the principal service at Wittenberg, which was still celebrated in accordance with Catholic usage, so as to bring it into agreement with the "institution of Christ." This

[1] C. F. Jäger, "Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt," 1856, p. 273. Cp. H. Barge, "Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt," 1, 1905, p. 355 ff.

[2] Karl Müller, "Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," 1910, p. 29.

[3] *Idem*, "Luther und Karlstadt," 1907, p. 15,

new service was first celebrated at Christmas, 1521. Those portions which express the sacrificial character of the Mass were omitted, and a new Communion service introduced instead, the laity partaking of the chalice and the words of institution being spoken aloud. Confession was not required of the communicants. The novelty and the ease of receiving communion attracted crowds to the new ritual, which was first held in All Saints' Church, then in the parish church, and was subsequently introduced by his followers, such as Zwilling, for instance, in the neighbouring parishes.

Great disorders occurred at the very first service of this sort.

Many communicated after eating and drinking freely. In January, 1522, a noisy rabble forced its way into the church at Wittenberg, destroyed all altars, and the statues of the saints, and cast them, together with the clergy, into the street.

The Elector and his Councillors, for instance Hieronymus Schurf, were very angry with the business and with the "pseudo-prophets," i.e. Carlstadt and his followers; the Zwickauers, who, as a matter of fact constituted an even greater source of danger, held back on this occasion.

Melanchthon, then at Wittenberg, inclined to the belief that the Zwickauers were possessed by a higher spirit, but it was, he thought, for Luther to determine the nature of this spirit. The prophets, on the other hand, argued that Luther was certainly right in most he said and did, though not always, and that another, having a higher spirit, would take his place.

The purer and more profound view of the Evangel upon which they secretly prided themselves was a consequence of their eminently reasonable opposition to Luther's altogether outward doctrine of justification and the state of grace. To them the idea of a purely mechanical covering over of our sinfulness by the imputation of Christ's merits, seemed totally inadequate. They wanted to be in a more living communion with Christ, and having once seceded from the Church, they arrived by the path of pseudo-mysticism at the delusion of a direct intercourse with the other world; thereby, however, they brought a danger on the field, viz. religious radicalism and political revolution. "It seems to me a very suspicious circumstance," so Luther writes of the

Zwickau prophets, "that they should boast of speaking face to face with the Divine Majesty."[1]

Luther, after his period of study at the Wartburg, had at once to define and prove his position, particularly as he disapproved of much of the doctrines of Carlstadt's party, as well as of his over-hasty action. Without delay, he mounted the pulpit at Wittenberg and staked all the powers of his personality and eloquence against the movement; he was unwilling that the whole work of the Evangel which had begun should end in chaos. In a course of eight sermons he traced back the disorders to "a misapprehension of Christian freedom." It grieved him deeply, he declared, that, without his order, so much was being altered instead of proceeding cautiously and allowing the faith to mature first. "Follow me," he cried, "I have never yet failed; I was the first whom God set to work on this plan; I cannot escape from God, but must remain so long as it pleases my Lord God; I was also the first to whom God gave the revelation to preach and proclaim this His Word to you. I am also well assured that you have the pure Word of God."[2]

What he says is, however, rather spoilt by a dangerous admission. "Should there be anyone who has something better to offer and to whom more has been revealed than to me, I am ready to submit to him my sense and reason and not to force my opinion upon him, but to obey him."[3] He, of course, felt that he could convict the so-called "fanatics" of error, and was sure beforehand that his professed readiness to submit to others would not endanger his position. His whole cause depended on the maintenance of outward order and his own authority at Wittenberg; he knew, moreover, that he was backed by the Elector.

His success against his adversaries, who, to tell the truth, were no match for him, was complete. Wittenberg was saved from the danger of open adherence to "fanaticism," though the movement was still to give Luther much trouble secretly at Wittenberg and more openly elsewhere, particularly as Carlstadt, in his disappointment, came more

[1] On January 13, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 271 f. Cp. K. Müller, "Luther und Karlstadt," p. 218.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 8; Erl. ed., 28, p. 211 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 8 = 212.

and more after 1522 to make common cause with the Zwickauers.[1]

The success of his efforts against the fanatics secured for Luther the favour of his Ruler and his protection against the consequences of his outlawry by the Empire. Luther was thus enabled to carry on his work as professor and preacher at Wittenberg in defiance of the Emperor and the Empire; from thence, till the very end of his life, he was able, unmolested, to spread abroad, with the help of the Press, his ideas of ecclesiastical revolution.

In view of the movement just described, and of others of a like nature, he published towards the close of his Patmos sojourn the work entitled "A True Admonition to all Spirits to Avoid Riot and Revolt."[2] This, however, did not prevent him shortly after from furthering the idea of the use of force with all his habitual incautious violence in the tract "Against the Falsely-called Spiritual Estate of the Pope and the Bishops" (1522),[3] in which, in language the effect of which upon the masses it was impossible to gauge, he incites the people to overthrow the existing Church government.

"Better were it," he cries in the latter work, "that all bishops were put to death, and all foundations and convents rooted out, than that one soul should suffer. What then must we say when all souls are lost for the sake of vain mummery and idols? Of what use are they but to live in pleasure on the sweat and toil of others and to hinder the Word of God?" A revolt against such tyrants could not, he says, be wicked; its cause would not be the Word of God, but their own obstinate disobedience and rebellion against God. "What better do they deserve than to be stamped out by a great revolt? Such a thing, should it occur, would only give cause for laughter, as the Divine Wisdom says, Proverbs i. 25–26: 'You have despised all my counsel and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction.'"[4]

Expressing similar sentiments, the so-called "Bull of Reformation," comprised in the last-mentioned tract, has it that "all who assist in any way, or venture life or limb, goods or honour in the enterprise of destroying bishoprics and exterminating episcopal rule, are dear children of God and true Christians. . . .

[1] Barge, "Karlstadt," 1, p. 405; cp. 402 f.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 670 ff.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 43 ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, 10, 2, p. 93 ff. = 28, p. 141 ff.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 111 = 148 f.

On the other hand all who hold with the rule of the bishops . . . are the devil's own servants."[1] Such is the teaching of "Ecclesiastes, by the Grace of God," as Luther calls himself here and frequently elsewhere. They must listen to him; the bishops, for the sake of their idol the Pope, abused, condemned and consigned to the flames him and his noble cause, refusing either to listen to or to answer him, but now he will, so he says, "put on his horns and risk his head for his master," in defiance of the "idolatrous, licentious, shameless, accursed seducers and wolves."

As a demolisher Luther proved himself great and strong. Was he an equally good builder?

The decisive question of how to proceed to the construction of a new ecclesiastical system seems to have been scarcely considered at all by Luther, either at the Wartburg, or even for some time after his return. His mind was full of one idea, viz. how best to fight the Church of Antichrist. He had no real conception of the Church which might have assisted him in an attempt to plan out a new system; his notion of the Church was altogether too dim and indefinite to serve as the basis of a new organisation. Even to-day Protestant theologians and historians are unable to tell us with any sort of unanimity how his ideas of the Church are to be understood; this holds good of him throughout life, but most of all during the earliest days of Protestantism, when the first attempts were made to consolidate it.

One of the most recent explorers in the field of the history of theology in those years, H. Hermelink, concludes a paper on the subject with the words: "Let us hope that we Protestant theologians may gradually reach some agreement concerning Luther's idea of the Church and concerning the Reformer's plans for the reorganisation of the Church."[2]

K. Rieker, K. Sohm, W. Köhler, Karl Müller, P. Drews, Fr. Loofs and many others who have recently devoted themselves to these studies which have aroused so much interest in our day, all differ more or less from each other in their views on the subject.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 140=178. It has been asserted, strangely enough, that these words were spoken by Luther hypothetically, i.e. in the event of the Romanists refusing to be converted, and that the word he uses, and which we have rendered as "destroying," really means something slightly less drastic.

[2] H. Hermelink, "Zu Luthers Gedanken über Idealgemeinden und von weltlicher Obrigkeit," in "Zeitschr. für Kirchengesch.," 29, 1908, p. 489; cp. p. 479 ff.

The fact must not be forgotten that the Apocalyptic tendency of Luther's mind at that time prevented his dwelling on matters of practical organisation. The reign of Antichrist at Rome seemed to him to portend the end of the world. Apocalyptic influences oppressed him, particularly in the years 1522 and 1523, and we find their traces at intervals even afterwards, for instance, in the years following 1527 and just before his death ;[1] in each case they were due to outward and interior "trials." In the first crisis, at the commencement of the third decade of the sixteenth century, his false eschatology, based on an erroneous understanding of the Bible, led him, for instance, to anticipate the coming of the Last Day in 1524, in consequence of a remarkable conjunction of the planets which was confidently expected to bring about a deluge. His sermon on the 2nd Sunday in Advent fixes the year 1524 as the latest on which this event could occur.[2]

In his work "To the Nobility on the Improving of the Christian State," Luther still took it for granted that the Emperor, Princes and influential laity would forcibly rescue Christendom from the state of corruption in which it was sunk, and that after Christendom had accepted the evangel, the pre-existing order of things would continue very much as before under a reformed episcopate ; should the bishops refuse to come over to the Gospel, plenty "idle parsons" would be found to take their place. As a matter of fact, he had no clear idea in his mind regarding the future shaping of affairs.

At the Diet of Worms it became evident that his fantastic dreams were not to be realised, for the Empire, instead of welcoming him, proclaimed him an outlaw. Luther, accordingly, trusting to his mystical ideas, now persuaded himself that his cause and the reorganisation of Christendom would be undertaken by Christ alone.

In the Wartburg Luther received the fullest and most definite assurance that the temporal powers who were opposed to him at Worms would submit themselves in these latter days to the Word which he preached, and that the weakening of the Church's authority which had been begun had not proceeded nearly far enough. It was revealed to him that his work was yet at its beginning and that there yet remained to be established new communities of Christians sharing his views. Hence we find him writing to Frederick, his Elector, on March 7, 1522 : "The spiritual tyranny has been weakened, to do which has been the sole aim of my writings ; now I perceive that God wills to carry it still further as He did with Jerusalem and its twofold

[1] H. Preuss, "Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist," 1906, p. 146.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 69 : "Der jüngste Tag, welchen sie [die Constellation] gewisslich bedeutet."

government. I have recently learnt that not only the spiritual but also the temporal power must give way to the Evangel, willingly or unwillingly; this is plainly shown in all the Bible narratives."[1] With the Bible in his hand he seeks to prove, from the passages relating to the end of the world, and the reign of Antichrist, that, before the end of all, Christ will overthrow the anti-Christian powers by the "breath of His mouth."

"It is the mouth of Christ which must do this." "Now may I and everyone who speaks the word of Christ freely boast that his mouth is the mouth of Christ." "Another man, one whom the Papists cannot see, is driving the wheel, and therefore they attribute it all to us, but they shall yet be convinced of it."[2]

Meanwhile some practical action was necessary, for, as yet, the Evangelicals formed only small groups and unorganised congregations which might at any time drift apart, whilst elsewhere they were scattered among the masses, almost unnoticed and utterly powerless. The mere attacking of Popery was not sufficient to consolidate them. The "meetings" of those who had been touched by the "Word," Gospel-preaching and a new liturgy, did not suffice. The further growth and permanent organisation of the congregations Luther hoped to see effected by the help of the authorities, by the Town-councillors, who were to play so great a part later, and, better still, by the Princes whom he expected to win over to the new teaching as he had already done in the case of Frederick, the Elector of Saxony. It is true he would have preferred the setting up of churches to have been the work of the newly converted Faithful, i.e. to have taken place from below upwards. Those who had been converted by the Gospel, "the troubled consciences" as he calls them, who were united in faith and charity, were ever to form the nucleus around which he would fain have seen everywhere the congregations growing, without the intervention of the worldly power. The force of circumstances, however, even from the commencement, compelled him to fall back on the authorities.

In short, the ideas he advanced concerning organisation

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 111 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 298).

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 683, in the "True Admonition," published early in December, 1521.

were, not only various, but frequently contradictory. His favourite idea, to which we shall return later, of a community of perfect Christians was utterly incapable of realisation. "To maintain within the Congregation a more select company forming a corporation apart was hardly feasible in the long run."[1] At the back of his various plans was always the persuasion that the power of the Gospel would in the end do its own work and reveal the right way for the building up of a new organisation, just as of its own power it had shattered the edifice of Antichrist. Instead of searching for the link connecting his discordant utterances, as Protestant[2] theologians have been at pains to do, it will be more practical and more in accordance with history to present them here in disconnected groups. For any lack of clearness which may be the result Luther must be held responsible.

In one and the same work, shortly after his visit to Wittenberg from the Wartburg, the destruction of the Papacy is depicted first as the result of the action of the governments (who accordingly are bound to provide a new, even if only temporary, organisation), then as taking place through no human agency and without a single blow being struck.[3] In writing thus, he was the plaything of those "states of excitement" which constitute a marked feature of his "religious psychology."[4] Luther was then aware of the threatening movement at Wittenberg and elsewhere, and attempted to stem it with the assurance that the kingdom of Antichrist was already crumbling to pieces; he does not, however, omit to point to the governments as the real agents of which Christ was to make use to achieve the victory: "Hearken to the government; so long as it does not interfere and give the command, keep your hands, your mouth and your heart quiet and say and do nothing. But if you are in a position to move the authorities to intervene and to give the order, you may do so."[5]

[1] Karl Müller, "Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," p. 84.

[2] Cp. K. Müller, *ibid.*, and the authors quoted in the above-mentioned studies of P. Drews and H. Hermelink.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, pp. 683, 678.

[4] Hermelink (p. 297). He thinks the "states of excitement may be easily accounted for."

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 680.

It would seem from all this as though he expected the help necessary for the change of faith to come solely from those in authority, an opinion which he had expressed in his pamphlet to the nobility, the Princes and the gentry; the secular power after making its "submission" to the Evangel was to do all that was required in the interests of the Evangel; it was its duty to see that uniformity prevailed in the "true worship" throughout its dominions, to watch over the public services and exclude false worship. But whether the "Kingdom of God was to be introduced by the Princes, or to rise up spontaneously from the Christian Congregation, he does not clearly state."[1] From 1522 to 1525 he frequently speaks as though it were to proceed solely from the congregation, which by reason of the common priesthood of its members was possessed of the necessary qualifications.

In any case, we may gather the following regarding Church organisation: no outward government, no power or legislative authority exists in the Church itself; on earth there is but one outward authority, viz. the secular; the Church lives only by the Word of God and supports and governs itself by this alone.

If legislation and external authority were called for in the Church, then this would have to be borrowed from the State, or, as Rudolf Sohm expresses it: "If legislation and judicial authority were needed in the Church of Christ, then, according to Luther's principles, the government of the Church would have to be set up by the ruler of the land." For, according to Luther, the authority of the Church is intended merely to foster piety,[2] and a spiritual governing authority would result in compulsion and simply make people "impious." "The ecclesiastical authority to rule of the parson, i.e. his teaching office, is not a legal power." In his treatise on canon law, Sohm is one of the principal supporters of this principle.[3] To judge from the praise bestowed upon him by Hermelink, he had "penetrated deeply into Luther's thought," and "on the whole saw things in a right light," although he was possibly too fond of simplifying them in the interests of a system.[4] It is perfectly true that in Sohm and other Protestant Canonists, the contradictions in Luther's opinions are left in the background; Luther's views of the formation of congregations having their own rights and

[1] Hermelink, p. 488; cp. p. 322.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 251 ff.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 68: "The spiritual government which makes people Christians and holy," etc.

[3] "Kirchenrecht," 1892, pp. 528, 633 f.

[4] Hermelink, p. 322.

their own authority, which appear side by side with his other schemes, receive, as a rule, little attention.

In any case, Luther at that time made use of "every artifice to prove that it was the right of each individual Christian to judge of the preaching of the Gospel and of the avoiding of false prophets."[1]

In those early days Luther was so full of the ideal of the congregation that, in order to support it, he even appeals to the natural law. In order to save souls every congregation, government or individual has by nature the right to make every effort to drive away the wolves, i.e. the clergy of Antichrist; no apathy can be permitted where it is a question of eternal salvation; the alleged rights and the handed-down possessions of the foes, on which they base their corruptive influence, must not be spared: "We must not fall upon and seize the temporal possessions of others, above all not of our superiors—except where it is a question of doctrine and the salvation of souls; but if the Gospel is not preached, the spiritual authorities have no right to the revenues."[2] "According to Luther," says Hermelink, "the authorities of Altenburg had a perfect right to drive away the Provost and his people from Altenburg as ravening wolves"; they were only to wait "a little" to see whether the monks would hold their tongues or perhaps even preach the pure Gospel. When thereupon Luther cries: "Their authority is at an end, abrogated by God Himself, if it be in conflict with the Gospel,"[3] Hermelink admits the presence of a certain "antagonism between the right of each individual Christian and the common law of society."

Luther, however, generally prefers to give expression to other less violent thoughts anent the building up of the congregations to be formed from the Church of Antichrist.

The holy Brotherhood of the Spirit, he says in his idealistic way, was to arise, knowing no constraint but only charity, and having a ministry ("*ministerium*"), but no "power."[4] "The freedom of the Spirit which must reign, makes things which are merely corporal and earthly, indifferent and not necessary." "All things are indifferent and free ('*omnia sunt indifferentia et libera*')." "Paul demands the preservation of unity, but this is unity of the spirit, not of place, of persons, of things or of bodies."[5] We here again note the advent of that mysticism which had

[1] Cp. Luther's Memorandum for the Town Council of Altenburg (April 28, 1522), "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 347 ff. "For Scripture does not give to a council but to each individual Christian the authority to decide on doctrine and discern the wolves," etc.

[2] Hermelink, p. 309.

[3] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 349.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 721.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 720.

formerly dragged him down to the depths of a passive indifference. How these pseudo-mystical ideas were to further the building up of the new ecclesiastical system it is hard to understand.

The Brotherhood, however, is not intended to introduce an altogether new ecclesiastical system. We are simply "Christians," the true Christians, members of the Churches which have always existed, but purified from a thousand years of deformation. "To create sects is stupid and useless";[1] according to Luther, it is not even necessary for the task of uniting under the Christian name, before the end of the world, all the faithful and the pious consciences elected from the Kingdom of Antichrist.

At that time he wished all his followers to be known simply as "Christians"; and in the first days of the Protestant Churches he very frequently makes use of this term.[2] Even at a later date he was loath to hear them called after himself, in spite of his practical action to the contrary, because they "share with the rest the common teaching of Christ."[3] The term "Evangelicals" does not appear to have been much in use in Luther's immediate surroundings.[4] As "Christians" and "Evangelicals" they had not left the "Church," indeed, Luther always insists on the fact that it was they who really constituted and represented the "Church." According to the Augsburg Confession in 1530 they belonged to the Catholic Church; they wished to define their position rather as that of a party within the Church, fighting for its existence, a party which accepted the Church's recognised articles of belief, sheltered itself under the testimony of recognised Catholic authorities, and which had merely introduced certain innovations for the removal of the abuses which had crept in.[5]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, 10, 2, p. 33.

[2] Cp. the addresses, "To the Christians at Wittenberg," "To the Christians at Augsburg," and similar ones to those at Dorpat, in Flanders, in Holland, in Livonia, at Miltenberg, at Reval, at Riga, at Worms, at Antwerp, at Bremen, at Reutlingen, at Strasburg, etc.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 685. [4] Hermelink, p. 298.

[5] In this Confession we read that in their teaching there was nothing, "*Quod discrepet a scripturis vel ab ecclesia catholica vel ab ecclesia romana, quatenus ex scriptoribus nota est.*" "Corp. Ref.," 26, p. 290. So runs the address presented to the Emperor, which Melanchthon afterwards toned down in the 2nd edition. Cp. Kolde, "Die Con-

Although, according to Luther, the inward organisation of the Brotherhood referred to above was a matter of indifference, and the approaching end of the world admonished him to suffer and wait to see what Christ willed to do with it, yet we read in other passages of his writings that it is necessary to work and to make great efforts to provide every city with a bishop or elder to preach the Gospel; "every Christian" is bound to help towards this end, both by personal exertion and with his goods, and more particularly the secular power, the authorities, whose duty it is to protect the pious. Those who are now already parsons may, indeed must, at once "withdraw from their obedience, seeing that they promised obedience to the devil and not to God."[1]

This is certainly "something more than passive suffering and waiting for the end."[2]

The apostasy of the clergy, which had begun, made the question of definite, external organisation a pressing one, for the new preachers and the clergy who were coming over had, after all, to be responsible to someone and had also to be maintained; it was also necessary that they and their followers should receive external recognition for their Churches and extricate themselves from the numerous ties which united so closely the spiritual with the secular in Catholic life. The appointment of pastors and the representation of the faithful by them was one of the factors which called for further organisation of the Churches: another factor, as we may notice in the case of Wittenberg, was the manner of celebrating the Supper. It was, as a matter of fact, the trouble at Wittenberg under Carlstadt which impelled Luther to take into serious consideration the establishment of an independent ecclesiastical organisation in that town, and which called for a definite system of appointing the Lutheran pastors even elsewhere, so as to

fessio Augustana," p. 11. Kawerau (Möller's "Kirchengeschichte," 3, vol. iii., 1907, p. 108) also quotes the Protestant declaration of 1546 ("Corp. Ref.," 6, p. 35): "*Nostri affirmant . . . confessionis Augustanæ doctrinam . . . esse consensum catholicæ ecclesiæ Dei*," and the Wittenberg Ordination-papers that the person in question "*tenet puram doctrinam evangelii quam catholica ecclesia Christi profitetur et nos in ecclesia nostra docemus*" ("Luthers Briefwechsel," 11, 278; October 7, 1537).

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, pp. 140, 143, 144, 139, 110.

[2] Hermelink, p. 302.

prevent Carlstadt's followers from getting the upper hand throughout the country.

After Luther had set aside Carlstadt's innovations at Wittenberg, with the approval of the Elector who had forbidden them, he appointed the celebration of the Supper for those of the new faith at Wittenberg on the lines previously followed by Melanchthon; the communion became the principal part of the ceremony, the offertory was omitted and the words of consecration were spoken aloud either with or without certain of the prayers of the Mass. Thus the abuses introduced by Carlstadt were, in his opinion, removed, and the swarms of worldly minded and fanatical nominal Christians, "Christian in name but almost heathen at heart," were no longer brought in contact with the true Evangelicals; the employment of force towards those weak in the faith, whose convictions Luther did not consider ripe for the purely congregational ritual of Carlstadt, was also put an end to. All the external forms which had been introduced, and to which, Luther feared, the people would have clung in an unevangelical fashion as had formerly been the case in Popery, were removed.

In order more particularly to avoid any compromising abuse of the Sacrament of the Altar, Luther sought to establish a Christian congregation in which confession should exist, though not as a compulsory practice, and in which a certain supervision was exercised.

In order to proceed cautiously and in accordance with the Elector's ideas, he refrained from directing the bestowal of the chalice in the order of Divine Service drawn up for the use of his followers; at any rate, this was the case at Easter, 1522, though in the autumn of that same year the chalice was again in general use.[1] In spite of this, up to 1523, a special form of communion with the cup was in use for true Evangelical believers, who were subject to a special form of supervision. This arrangement agreed with Luther's idea of an "Assembly of true Christians," on which he was to enlarge in 1523 in his Maundy-Thursday sermon (see below). The special communion was, it is true, speedily abandoned, but the idea of the select Assembly ever remained dear to him.[2]

[1] K. Müller, "Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," p. 33, n. 3, where stress is rightly laid on the testimony of Sebastian Fröschel.

[2] Cp. Müller, *ibid.*, p. 34.

The other factor which called even more urgently for internal organisation was the appointment of pastors.

The induction of new pastors could not well take place independently of the authorities, indeed, it imperatively demanded their co-operation. At Wittenberg the later alteration in the liturgy and the final prohibition of the Mass, after it had been insisted on by Luther, was carried out by a threatening mob with the connivance of the Government.[1] Yet, in spite of the impossibility of dispensing with the secular power, until 1525, Luther was for various reasons more inclined to the Congregational ideal, which was less subject to Government interference.

This congregational ideal tended to promote his plan of an "Assembly of true Christians."

In the newly erected congregations the "true believers," according to what Luther repeatedly says, formed the nucleus. It is to these that he appeals in his instructions in 1523 ("*iis qui credunt, hæc scribimus*"); "those whose hearts God has touched are to meet together," so he says, in order to choose a "bishop," i.e. "a minister or pastor." Even though the congregation numbers only half a dozen, yet they will draw after them others "who have not yet received the Word"; the half a dozen, though but a handful and perhaps not distinguished by piety, so long as they do not live as obstinate and open sinners, are the real representatives of the true Church at their home. They must also rest assured, that if in their choice they have prayed to God for enlightenment, they "will be moved, and not act of themselves ('*vos agi in hac causa, non agere*')." "That Christ acts through them is quite certain ('*plane certum*')."[2] "Hence even a small minority of the truly pious among the congregation possess not only the right but also the duty to act; for to stand by and let things take their course is contrary to the faith."[3] The election

[1] See below, xiv. 5, and vol. iv., xxviii. 6.

[2] "*De instituendis ministris ecclesiæ, senatui populoque Pragensi*," 1523. "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 194 f.; "Opp. Lat. var.," 6, p. 530 *seq.* It follows from the context of the passage quoted above that Luther's assurance is intended to be their guarantee that they are acting in God's name, and are not themselves taking the initiative, but submitting to be led. Cp. letter to the Bohemian Estates (1522), Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 172 ff.; Erl. ed., 53, p. 144 ff.

[3] Paul Drews ("Entsprach das Staatskirchentum dem Ideale Luthers?" p. 36), in the examination of the instruction mentioned in the previous note.

derives its "true validity solely from the half-dozen."[1] Of any election by the remaining members of the congregation or of any action of the magistracy Luther says nothing whatever; he is speaking only to those within the body of the congregation whose hearts God has touched.

The above thoughts find their first expression in the writing "*De instituendis ministris ecclesiæ*," which Luther sent to the Utraquists or Calixtines of Prague.[2]

The Utraquists of Bohemia acknowledged the Primacy of the Holy See and obeyed the Catholic Hierarchy, though certain Lutheran tendencies prevailed amongst them, which, however, had been grossly exaggerated by Cahera, who informed Luther of the fact; Cahera even represented the greater part of the Council of Prague as predisposed in Luther's favour, which was certainly not true. In instructing the burghers, and more particularly the Council of Prague, how to proceed in founding congregations of their own by means of elections, Luther was also thinking of Germany, and above all of Saxony. This explains why, without delay, he had the Latin writing published also in German.

To the people of Prague he wrote that those whose hearts God had touched were to assemble in the city for the election. They were first to remind themselves in prayer that the Lord had promised that where two or three were gathered together in His name, there He would be in the midst of them; then they were to select capable persons for the clerical state and the ministry of the Word, who were then to officiate in the name of all; these were then to lay their hands on the best amongst them ("*potiores inter vos*"), thus confirming them, after which they might be presented to "the people and the Church or congregation as bishops, servants or pastors, Amen." "It all depends on your making the venture in the Lord, then the Lord will be with you." In the congregations scattered throughout the land the faithful were to proceed in like manner, firing others by their example; if they were few in number, there was all the more reason why they should make the venture. But as all was to be done spontaneously and under the influence of the Spirit of God, such Councils as were favourably disposed were not to exercise any constraint. He, too, for his own part, merely gave "advice and

[1] Thus Hermelink (p. 483), though he does not find the congregational principle so decidedly expressed in Luther's writings as Drews does. Luther's statements in the years 1522–1525 concerning the establishment of new congregations are certainly not at all clear, as Karl Müller admits ("Luther und Karlstadt," "Luthers Gedanken über den Aufbau der neuen Gemeinden," p. 121). Cp. concerning the existence of Luther's congregational ideal, "Kirche, Gemeinde," usw., p. 40 ff.

[2] Above, p. 111, n. 2. The writing is addressed to the Council and the inhabitants collectively ("*senatus populusque*"). Yet in certain passages the Council alone is addressed.

exhortation."[1] Where a large number of congregations had appointed their "ministers" in this way, then these latter might, if they so desired, meet to elect Superintendents who would make the visitation of their Churches, "until Bohemia finally returns to the legitimate and evangelical Archiepiscopate."

At about that same time, in a writing intended for the congregation at Leisnig, Luther expressed his views on the congregational Churches to be established by the people. The confusion of his mind is no less apparent in this work; under the influence of his idealism he fails to perceive the endless practical difficulties inherent in his scheme, and above all the impossibility of establishing any real congregation when every member had a right to criticise the preacher and to interpret Scripture according to his own mind.[2]

He here assumes that the liberty to preach the Word, and likewise the right of judging doctrines, is part of the common priesthood of Christians. Whoever preaches publicly can only do this "as the deputy and minister of the others," i.e. of the whole body.[3] The congregation must see that no one seduces them with the doctrines of men, and therefore no one may be a preacher except by their choice. Where there is no bishop to provide for them, who holds Christian and evangelical views, they are themselves to give the call to the right preacher; but if they catch him erring in his doctrine, then anyone may get up and correct him, so long as "all done is done decently and in order."[4] For St. Paul says concerning those who speak during Divine Worship [St. Paul is really alluding to the charismata of the early Christians], "If anything be revealed to another sitting, let the first hold his peace" (1 Cor. xiv. 30). "Indeed, a Christian has such authority that he might well rise up and teach uncalled even in the midst of the Christians. . . . For this reason, that necessity knows no law." Therefore to preserve the purity of the evangelical teaching, "every man may come forward, stand up and teach, to the best of his ability."[5]

The experience with the fanatics which speedily followed was calculated to dispel such platonic ideas. Luther does not appear to have asked himself on which side the "Christian congregation" and the Church was to be sought when dissensions, doctrinal or other, at that period inevitable, should have riven the fold in twain. The "Christian congregation" he teaches—merely restating the difficulty—"is most surely to be recognised where the pure Gospel is preached. . . . From the Gospel we may tell where Christ stands with His army."[6]

[1] In the Preface: "*Nequaquam esse possum autor quidquam tentandi, nisi per consilium et exhortationem.*"

[2] The title of the work describes it well: "The Scriptural ground and reason why a Christian congregation or assembly has the right and power to pass judgment on all doctrines, to call, appoint, or remove pastors," 1523. "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 401 ff.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 140 ff. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 412=147. [4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 412, 413, 414=147, 148, 149.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 408=142.

How bold the edifice was which he had planned in the evangelical Churches is plain from other statements contained in the writing addressed to the Leisnig Assembly.

The president was indeed to preside, but all the members were to rule. "Whoever is chosen for the office of preacher is thereby raised to the most exalted office in Christendom; he is then authorised to baptise, to say Mass and to hold the cure of souls."[1] Yet he is subject both to the community and to every member of it. "In the world the masters command what they please and their servants obey. But amongst you, Christ says, it shall not be so; amongst Christians each one is judge of the other, and in his turn subject to the rest."[2]

He might say what he pleased against the abuses of the old Church, such systematic disorder never prevailed within her as that each one should teach as he pleased and even correct the preacher publicly, or that the Demos should be acknowledged as supreme. It is in vain that, in the writing above referred to, he mocks at this city set on a hill, with her firmly established hierarchy, saying: "Bishops and Councils determine and settle what they please, but where we have God's Word on our side it is for us to decide what is right or wrong and not for them, and they shall yield to us and obey our word."[3] We may well explain the saying "to obey our word" by Luther's own eloquent paraphrase: "Pay no heed to the commandments of men, law, tradition, custom, usage and so forth, whether established by Pope or Emperor, Prince or Bishop, whether observed by half the world or by the whole, whether in force for one year or for a thousand!" "Obey our word!" For we declare that we have the "Word of God on our side."[4]

The new congregations will, in spite of their own and every member's freedom to teach, agree with Luther, so he assures them with the most astounding confidence, because "his mouth is the mouth of Christ," and because he knows that his word is not his, but Christ's. We must emphasise the fact, that here we have the key to many of the strange trains of thought already met with in Luther, and also a proof of the endurance of his unpractical ultra-spiritualism.

Luther, in fact, declares that he had "not merely received his teaching from heaven, but on behalf of one who had

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 415 f. = 151.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 410 = 145.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 409 f. = 143 f.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 408 f. = 142.

more power in his little finger than a thousand popes, kings, princes and doctors."[1] Before receiving his enlightenment he had had to learn what was meant by being "born of God, dying often and surviving the pains of hell."[2] Whoever differed from him, as the fanatics did, had not been through such an experience. "Wouldst thou know where, when and how we are vouchsafed the divine communications? When that which is written takes place: 'As a lion, so hath He broken all my bones' (Isa. xxxviii. 13). . . . God's Majesty cannot speak in confidence with the old man without previously slaying. . . . The dreams and visions of the saints are dreadful."[3] Such was the mysticism of the Wartburg.

2. Against Celibacy. Doubtful Auxiliaries from the Clergy and the Convents

In establishing his new ecclesiastical organisation Luther thought it his duty to wage war relentlessly on the celibacy of the clergy and on monastic vows in general. Was he more successful herein than in his project of reforming the articles of faith and the structure of the Church?

According to Catholic ideas his war against vows and sacerdotal celibacy constituted an unwarrantable and sacrilegious interference with the most sacred promises by which a man can bind himself to the Almighty, for it is in this light that a Catholic considers vows or the voluntary acceptance of celibacy upon receipt of the major orders. Luther was, moreover, tampering with institutions which are most closely bound up with the life of the Church and which alone render possible the observance of that high standard of life and that independence which should distinguish the clergy. Yet his mistaken principles served to attract to his camp all the frivolous elements among the clergy and religious, i.e. all those who were dissatisfied with their state and longed for a life of freedom. As a matter of fact, experience speedily showed that nothing was more

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 228=28, p. 346, in his reply to King Henry VIII "of Engelland" (1522).

[2] To Melanchthon, January 13, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 272 f.: "*Veniam ad prophetas. . . . Explores etiam, num experti sint spirituales illas angustias et nativitates divinas, mortes infernosque.*"

[3] *Ibid.*, 3, p. 273.

calculated to bring the Reformation into disrepute. Lutheranism threw open the doors of the convents, burst the bonds imposed by vows, and reduced hundreds of the clergy to a moral debasement against which their own conscience raised a protest. In outward appearance it was thereby the gainer, for by this means it secured new adherents in the shape of preachers to spread the cause, but in reality the positive gain was *nil;* in fact, the most vital interests of the new work were endangered owing to the low moral standard of so many of its advocates. Apart from the preachers, many followers of the new Evangelical teaching, fugitive religious and more especially escaped nuns, played a very lamentable part.

In various writings and letters Luther sought to familiarise the clergy and monks with the seductive principles contained in his books "On the Clerical State" and "On Monastic Vows." His assurances all went to prove that the observance of priestly celibacy and the monastic state was impossible. He forgot what he had once learnt and cheerfully practised, viz. that the sexual renunciation demanded in both professions was not merely possible, but a sacrifice willingly offered to God by all who are diligent in prayer and make use of the means necessary for preserving their virtue, and the numerous spiritual helps afforded by their state.

The powerful and seductive language he knows how to employ appears, for instance, in his letter to Wolfgang Reissenbusch, an Antonine monk,[1] who was already wavering, and in whose case Luther's strenuous efforts were crowned with success. The letter, which is dated March 27, 1525, was written shortly before Luther's union with Catharine von Bora.

The writer in the very first lines takes pains to convince this religious; that "he had been created by God for the married state and was forced and impelled by Him thereto." The religious vow was worthless, because it required what was impossible, since "chastity is as little within our power as the working of miracles"; man was utterly unable to resist his natural attraction to woman; "whoever wishes to remain single let him put away his human name and fashion himself into an angel or a spirit, for to a man God does not give this grace."

[1] To Wolfgang Reissenbusch, Preceptor at Lichtenberg, "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 270–9; Erl. ed., 53, p. 286 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 145).

Elsewhere Luther, nevertheless, admits that some few by the help of God were able to live unmarried and chaste. In view of the sublime figures to be found in the history of the Church, and which it was impossible to impeach, he declares that "it is rightly said of the holy virgins that they lived an angelical and not a human life, and that by the grace of the Almighty they lived indeed in the flesh yet not according to it."

He proceeds to heap up imaginary objections against the vow of chastity, saying that whoever makes such a vow is building "upon works and not solely on the grace of God"; trusting to "works and the law" and denying "Christ and the faith." In the case of Reissenbusch, the only obstacle lay in his "bashfulness and diffidence." "Therefore there is all the more need to keep you up to it, to exhort, drive and urge you and so render you bold. Now, my dear Sir, I ask of you, why delay and think about it so long, etc.? It is so, must be and ever shall be so! Pocket your scruples and be a man cheerfully. Your body demands and needs it. God wills it and forces you to it. How are you to set that aside?" He points out to the wavering monk the "noble and excellent example which he will give"; he will become the "cloak of marriage" to many others. "Did not Christ become the covering of our shame? . . . Among the raving madmen [the Papists], it is accounted a shameful thing, and though they do not make any difficulty about fornication they nevertheless scoff at the married state, the work and Word of God. If it is a shameful thing to take a wife, then why are we not ashamed to eat and drink, since both are equally necessary and God wills both?" Thus he attributes to the Catholics, at least in his rhetorical outbursts, the view that it was a "shameful thing to take a wife," and accuses them of scoffing at the "married state," and of "not objecting to fornication." He did not see that if anyone strives to observe chastity in accordance with the Counsel of Christ without breaking his word and perjuring himself, this constancy is far from being a disgrace, but that the disgrace falls rather on him who endeavours to entice the monk to forsake his vows.

"The devil is the ruler of the world," Luther continues. "He it is who has caused the married state to be so shamefully calumniated and yet permits adulterers, feminine whores and masculine scamps to be held in great honour; verily it would be right to marry, were it only to bid defiance to the devil and his world."

In the closing sentence he aims his last bolt at the monk's sense of honour: "It is merely a question of one little hour of shame to be succeeded by years of honour. May Christ, our Lord, impart His grace so that this letter . . . may bring forth fruit to the glory of His name and word, Amen."

The letter was not intended merely for the unimportant person to whom it was addressed, and whose subsequent marriage with the daughter of a poor tailor's widow in Torgau did not render him any the more famous. Publicity was the object

aimed at in this writing, which was at once printed in German and Latin and distributed that it might "bear fruit." The lengthier "*Epistola gratulatoria* to one about to marry," immediately reprinted in German, was despatched by Luther's Wittenberg friend Bugenhagen at the time of Reissenbusch's wedding. It had been agreed upon to utilise the action of Reissenbusch for all it was worth in the propaganda in favour of the breaking of vows and priestly celibacy.

Luther was then in the habit of employing the strongest and most extravagant language in order to show the need of marriage in opposition to the celibacy practised by the priests and monks. It is only with repulsion that one can follow him here.

"It is quite true," he says, in 1522, to the German people, "that whoever does not marry must misconduct himself . . . for God created man and woman to be fruitful and multiply. But why is not fornication obviated by marriage? For where no extraordinary grace is vouchsafed, nature must needs be fruitful and multiply, and if not in marriage, where will it find its satisfaction save in harlotry or even worse sins?"[1] Luther carefully refrained from mentioning the countless number who were able to control the impulses of nature without in any way touching the moral filth to which, in his cynicism, he is so fond of referring. What he said filled with indignation those who were zealous for the Church, and called forth angry rejoinders, especially in view of the countless numbers, particularly of women, to whom marriage was denied owing to social conditions.

It is true that after such strong outbursts as the above, Luther would often moderate his language. Thus he says, shortly after the utterance just quoted: "I do not wish to disparage virginity nor to tempt people away from it to the conjugal state. Let each one do as he is able and as he feels God has ordained for him. . . . The state of chastity is probably better on earth as having less of trouble and care, and not for its own sake only, but in order to allow one to preach and wait upon the Word of God, as St Paul says 1 Corinthians vii. 34."[2]

But then he continues, following up the idea which possesses him: "He who desires to live single undertakes an impossible struggle"; such people become "full of harlotry and all impurity of the flesh, and at last drown themselves therein and fall into despair; therefore such a vow is invalid, being contrary to the Word and work of God."[3] Most of the younger religious, he declares elsewhere in a description which is as repulsive as it is untrue, were unable to control themselves, for it is not possible to take from fire its power of burning; among them, and the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 300; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 537 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 302=539.
[3] In the letter to Reissenbusch; see above, p. 116, n. 1.

clergy, there prevailed "either harlotry under the name of a spiritual and chaste life, or an impure, unwilling, wretched, forlorn chastity, so that the wretchedness is greater than anyone could believe or tell."[1]

What Luther says would leave us under the impression—to put the most charitable interpretation upon his words—that he had lived in sad surroundings; yet what we know of the Augustinian monasteries at Erfurt and Wittenberg affords as little ground for such an assumption as the conditions prevailing in the other friaries, whether Franciscan or Dominican, with which he was acquainted. He speaks again and again as though he knew nothing of the satisfaction with their profession which filled whole multitudes who were faithful to their vows, and which was the result of serious discipline and a devout mind. He goes on: "They extol chastity loudly, but live in the midst of impurity. . . . These pious foundations and convents, where the faith [according to his teaching] is not practised stoutly and heartily,"[2] must surely be gates of hell. Those who refrain from marriage for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven are, he considers, "so rare, that among a thousand men there is scarcely to be found one, for they are a special miracle of God's own."[3] He who enters a monastery, he writes (not in the least afraid of speaking as though this had been his own experience), can, in reality, never avoid sinning against his vow. The Pope leaves such a one to be, as it were, burnt and roasted in the fire; he accordingly might well be compared to the sacrifice which the children of Israel offered to Moloch the fiery idol. "What a Sodom and Gomorrha," he cries in another passage, "has the devil set up by such laws and vows, making of that rare gift chastity a thing of utter wretchedness. Neither public houses of ill fame, nor indeed any form of allurement to vice, is so pernicious as are these vows and commandments invented by Satan himself."[4] Such are his words in his "Postils," written for general, practical use.

His "larger Catechism" was also used as a means to render popular his most extravagant polemics on this subject. The sixth Commandment makes of chastity a duty, and Christ's counsel of voluntary continence was to serve for the preserving and honouring of this very command. Yet Luther says: "By this commandment all vows of unmarried chastity are condemned, and all poor, enslaved consciences which have been deceived by their monastic vows are thereby permitted, nay ordered, to pass from the unchaste to the conjugal state, seeing that even though the monastic life were in other particulars divine, it is not in their power to preserve their chastity intact."[5] Thus "the married

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 127; Erl. ed., 28, p. 165. Against the clerical state falsely so called.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 130=165 *seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 279=16², p. 514 f. "Sermon on the married life," 1522.

[4] *Ibid.*, 10, 1, 1, pp. 693, 708=12, p. 451, 465, "Postils."

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 21, p. 71.

state " is, at least, according to this passage, prescribed for all without exception in the Ten Commandments.

Still further to strengthen his seductive appeals to the clergy and religious, Luther, as he himself informs us, advised those who were unable to marry openly " at least to wed their cook secretly."[1]

To the Prince-Abbots he gave the advice that on account of the laws of the Empire they should, for the time being, " take a wife in secret," " until God, the Lord, shall dispose matters otherwise." In 1523 he advised all the Knights of the Teutonic Order, who were vowed to chastity, " not to worry " about their " weakness and sin " even though they had contracted some " illicit connections " ; such connections contracted outside of matrimony were " less sinful " than to " take a lawful wife " with the consent of a Council, supposing such a permission were given.[2] This last letter, too, was at once printed by Luther for distribution.[3]

His spirit of defiance led him to clothe his demands in outrageous forms. On one occasion he declared in language resembling that which he made use of concerning the laws of fasting : " Even though a man has no mind to take a wife he ought, nevertheless, to do so in order to spite and vex the devil and his doctrine."[4]

The Fathers of the Church accordingly found little favour with him when they required of the clergy, monks and nuns, not merely the observance of celibacy, but also the use of the means enjoined by asceticism for the preservation of chastity ; or when they betrayed their preference for the vow of chastity, though without by any means disparaging marriage. They quoted what Our Lord had said of this doctrine : " He that can take it, let him take it " (Matt. xix. 12). The Fathers, in the spirit of St. Paul, who, as one " having obtained mercy of the Lord," joyfully acquiesced in His " Counsel " of chastity (1 Cor. vii. 25), frequently advocated the doctrine of holy continence. But Luther asks : Of what use were their penitential practices for the preservation of their chastity to the Fathers, even to

[1] Letter of April or June, 1540, to the Elector of Saxony, quoted by J. K. Seidemann in " Lauterbachs Tagebuch," 1872, p. 198.
[2] See below.
[3] Cp. Enders, " Briefwechsel Luthers," 4, p. 266 f.
[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 556.

Augustine, Jerome, Benedict, Bernard, etc., since they themselves allow that they were constantly troubled by temptations of the flesh? In his opinion, as we already know, the attacks of sensuality, the movements of the carnal man and the enduring sense of our own concupiscence are really sins.

Jerome in particular, the zealous advocate of virginity, received at Luther's hands the roughest treatment. This saint is erroneously reckoned among the Fathers of the Church; he is of no account at all except for the histories he compiled; he was madly in love with the virgin Eustochium; his writings give no proof of faith or true religion; he had not the least idea of the difference between the law and the Gospel, and writes of it as a blind man might write of colour, etc. His invitations to the monastic life are described by Luther as impious, unbelieving and sacrilegious. Scoffing at the Saint's humble admission of his temptations in his old age and the severe mortifications he practised to overcome them, Luther says: The virgin Eustochium would have been the proper remedy for him. "I am astounded that the holy Fathers tormented themselves so greatly about such childish temptations and never experienced the exalted, spiritual trials [those regarding faith], seeing that they were rulers in the Church and filled high offices. This temptation of evil passions may easily be remedied if there are only virgins or women available."[1]

All these fell doctrines and allurements which without intermission were poured into the ears of clergy and religious alike, many of whom were uneducated, already tainted with worldliness, or had entered upon their profession without due earnestness, were productive of the expected result in the case of the weak. The sudden force of Luther's powerful and well-calculated attack upon the clergy and upon monasticism has been aptly compared to the effect of dynamite. But whoever fell, did so of his own free will. Such language was nothing but the bewitching song of the Siren addressed to the basest though most powerful instincts of man.

The historic importance of the attack upon ecclesiastical celibacy is by no means fully gauged if we merely regard it

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 262 ("Tischreden"). Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, pp. 315, 364; 3, p. 149.

as an effective method of securing preachers, allies and patrons for the new Evangel. It was, indeed, closely bound up with Luther's whole system, and his early theories on holiness by works and self-righteousness. His war on vows was too spontaneous, too closely connected with his own personal experience, to be accounted for merely by the desire of increasing the number of his followers. The aversion to the practice of good works which marked the commencement of his growth, his loathing for the sacrifices entailed by self-denial, the very stress he lays on the desires of nature as opposed to the promptings of grace, the delusion of evangelical freedom and finally his hatred of those institutions of the old Church which inspired her adherents with such vigorous life wherever they were rightly understood and practised—all this served as an incentive in the struggle.

A strange element which, according to his own statements, formed an undercurrent to all this and which indicates his peculiar state of mind, was that he looked upon the temptations of the flesh as something altogether insignificant in comparison with the exalted spiritual assaults of "blasphemy and despair" of which he had had personal experience.[1] In the passage already referred to, where he chides the Fathers with their "childish temptations," he says: Why on earth did they make such efforts for the preservation of their beloved chastity, or exert themselves for something entirely, or almost entirely, impossible of attainment? The temptations of the flesh are nothing at all, he proceeds, "compared with the Angel of Satan who buffets us; then indeed we are nailed to the cross, then indeed childish things such as the temptations which worried Jerome and others become of small account." In Paul's case, according to him, the "*angelus colaphizans*" (the angel who buffeted him, 2 Cor. xii. 7) was not a sting of the flesh at all, but exalted pangs of the soul, such as those to which the Psalmist alluded when he said: "God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" where he really means: "God, Thou art become my enemy without a cause," or again, that a sword has pierced his bowels (pains of the soul). He himself, Luther, had endured such-like

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 262.

things, but "Jerome and the other Fathers never experienced anything of the sort."[1]

Luther complains as early as 1522, i.e. at the very outset of this "Evangelical" movement, of the character of the auxiliaries who had been attracted to him by his attack on priestly and monastic continence.

In a letter sent to Erfurt he expresses his great dissatisfaction at the fact that, where apostate Augustinians had become pastors, their behaviour, like that of the other preachers drawn from the ranks of the priesthood, had "given occasion to their adversaries to blaspheme" against the evangel. He says he intends sending a circular letter to the "Church at Erfurt" on account of the bad example given.[2] The person to whom these bitter words were addressed, Luther's intimate friend, Johann Lang, the Erfurt Augustinian, had himself shortly before forsaken the monastery. The circumstances attending his leaving were very distasteful to Luther.

The evangelical life at Erfurt, where many of the priests were taking wives, must be improved, so he writes, even though the "understanding of the Word" had increased greatly there. "The power of the Word is either still hidden" he says, of the new evangel, "or it is far too weak in us all; for we are the same as before, hard, unfeeling, impatient, foolhardy, drunken, dissolute, quarrelsome; in short, the mark of a Christian, viz. abundant charity, is nowhere apparent; on the contrary, the words of Paul are fulfilled, 'we possess the kingdom of God in speech, but not in power'" (1 Cor. iv. 20).[3] In the same letter he complains of the monks who had left their convents to reinforce the ranks of his party: "I see that many of our monks have left their priory for no other reason than that which brought them in: they follow their bellies and the freedom of the flesh. By them Satan will set up a great stench against the good odour of our work. But what can we do? They are idle people who seek their own, so that it is better they should sin and go to destruction without the cowl than with it."

Luther complained still more definitely of his "parsons and preachers" in the Preface to the "Larger Catechism" which he composed for them in 1529: Many, he says, despise their office and good doctrine: some simply treated the matter as though they had become "parsons and preachers solely for their belly's sake"; he would exhort such "lazy paunches or presumptuous saints" to diligence in their office.[4] What he had predicted in 1522 became more and more plainly fulfilled: "It is true that

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 315.

[2] To Johann Lang at Erfurt, March 28, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 323 *seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 21, p. 26 ff.

I fear some will take wives or run away, not from Christian conviction, but because they rejoice to find a cloak and reason for their wickedness in the freedom of the evangel." His consolation, however, is, that it was just as bad and even worse in Popery, and if needs be "we still have the gallows, the wheel, sword and water to deal with such as will not do what is right."[1]

In later years, as his pupil Mathesius relates in the "Historien" of his conversations with him, Luther was anxious to induce the Elector to erect a "Priests' Tower" "in which such wild and untamed persons might be shut up as in a prison; for many of them would not allow themselves to be controlled by the Evangel; . . . all who once had run to the monasteries for the sake of their belly and an easy life were now running out again for the sake of the freedom of the flesh."[2] According to Lauterbach's "Tagebuch," however (1538), the Elector had before this decided to rebuild the University prison as a jail for such of the clergy of Luther's camp who misbehaved themselves,[3] and the Notes of Mathesius recently edited by Kroker allow us to infer that the prison had already been built in 1540.[4] Thus the account given by Mathesius in the "Historien" and quoted by him in sermons at a later date must be amended and amplified accordingly.

Even Luther's own followers looked askance at many of the recruits from the clergy and the monasteries, who came to swell the ranks of the preachers and adherents of the new Evangel. We are in possession of statements on this subject made by Eberlin, Hessus and Cordus.

"Scarcely has a monk or nun been three days out of the convent," writes Eberlin of Günzburg, "than they make haste to marry some woman or knave from the streets, without any godly counsel or prayer; in the same way the parsons too take whom they please, and then, after a short honeymoon, follows a long year of trouble."[5]

Eobanus Hessus, the Humanist, writes in 1523 from Erfurt to J. Draco that the runaway monks neglected education and learning and preached their own stupidities as wisdom; the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 35; Erl. ed., 28, p. 311, in the tract "Concerning the Sacrament under both kinds."

[2] Mathesius, "Historien," 1566, 11. Sermon 136′.

[3] "Lauterbachs Tagebuch," p. 13.

[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 72 f.

[5] Kampschulte, "Universität Erfurt," 2, p. 173, quoted from a publication which is not by the Erfurt preacher Mechler, as he thinks, but by Eberlin. Cp. N. Paulus in Janssen, 2^{18}, p. 240, n. 3.

number of such priests and nuns was increasing endlessly. "I cannot sufficiently execrate these fugitives. No Phyllis is more wanton than our nuns."[1]

A third witness, also from Erfurt, Euritius Cordus, complains in similar fashion in a letter written in 1522 to Draco: No one here has been improved one little bit by the evangel; "on the contrary, avarice has increased and likewise the opportunities for the worst freedom of the flesh"; priests and monks were everywhere set upon marrying, which in itself is not to be disapproved of, and the young students were more lawless than soldiers in camp.[2]

Protestant historians are fond of limiting the moral evils to the period which followed the Peasant Wars of 1525 as though they had been caused by the disorders of the time. The above accounts, given by followers of the new movement, extend, however, to earlier years, and to these many others previous to 1525 will be added in the course of our narrative.

It has also frequently been said that the confusion which always accompanies popular movements which stir men's minds must be taken into account when considering the disastrous moral effects so evident in the camp of the Reformers. But this view of the matter, if not false, is at least open to doubt. The disorders just described were not at all creditable to a work undertaken in the name of religion. The results were also felt long after. If all revolutions easily led to such consequences, in this instance the lamentable moral outcome was all the more inevitable, seeing that "freedom" was the watchword.

The undeniable fact of the existence of such a state of things was all the more disagreeable to its authors, i.e. Luther and his friends, since they were well aware that the great ecclesiastical movements in former days, which had really been inspired by God, usually exhibited, more particularly in their beginnings, abundant moral benefits. "The first fruits of the Spirit," as they had been manifested in the Church, were very different from those attending the efforts of the Wittenberg Professor, who, nevertheless, had

[1] "Helii Eobani Hessi et amicorum ipsius epistolarum familiarium libri 12," Marpurgi, 1543, p. 87. Phyllis, the beloved of Demophon, became the type of sensual passion.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 90. For date see Oergel, "Beiträge zur Gesch. des Erfurter Humanismus," in "Mitt. des Vereins für die Gesch. von Erfurt," part 15, 1892, p. 107.

himself designated this period as the "*primitiæ spiritus.*"[1] It was but poor comfort in their difficulty to strive to reassure themselves by considerations such as Cordus brings forward to meet the complaints we quoted above: "Maybe the Word of God has only now opened our eyes to see clearly, to recognise as sin, and abhor with fear, what formerly we scarcely heeded." This strange fashion of soothing his conscience he had learnt from Luther. (See vol. iv., xxiv.)

It is worth while to observe the impression which the facts just mentioned made on Luther's foes.

Erasmus, who at the commencement was not unfavourably disposed towards the movement, turned away from it with disgust, influenced, in part at least, by the tales he heard concerning the apostate priests and religious. "They seek two things," he wrote, "an income (*censum*) and a wife; besides, the evangel affords them freedom to live as they please."[2] In a letter to the Strasburg preacher, Martin Bucer, he said: "Those who have given up the recital of the Canonical Hours do not now pray at all; many who have laid aside the pharisaical dress are really worse than they were before."[3] And again: "The first thing that makes me draw back from this company is, that I see so many among this troop becoming altogether estranged from the purity of the Gospel. Some I knew as excellent men before they joined this sect; what they are now, I know not, but I hear that many have become worse, and none better."—The evangel now prospers, he says elsewhere, "because priests and monks take wives contrary to human laws, or at any rate contrary to their vow. Look around and see whether their marriages are more chaste than those of others upon whom they look as heathen."[4]

Valentine Ickelsamer, an Anabaptist opponent of Luther's, reminds him in his writing in defence of Carlstadt in 1525,[5] that Holy Scripture says: "By their works you shall know them." Even while studying at Wittenberg [a few years before] he had been obliged to appeal to this "text of Matthew septimo," out of disgust at the riotous life people led there; "they had, however, always found a convenient method of explaining it

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 263 ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 372, July, 1524): "I know that we . . . as St. Paul says, Romans viii. 23, have the first fruits of the Spirit, *primitias spiritus*, although we have not yet received the fulness of the Spirit."

[2] Letter to W. Pirkheimer, 1528, "Opp.," Lugduni Batavorum, 1702 *seq.*, t. 3, p. 1139.

[3] "Opp.," 3, p. 1030. Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1, p. 12.

[4] *Ibid.*, 10, p. 1578 *seq.* Döllinger, p. 15.

[5] "Clag etlicher Brüder," etc., ed. Enders ("Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke," No. 118, 1893), p. 48.

away, or got out of the difficulty by the help of some paltry gloss." "You also," he says to Luther, "loudly complained that we blamed only the faults on your side. No, we do not judge, or blame any sinner as you do; but what we do say is that where Christian faith is not productive of Christian works, there the faith is neither rightly preached nor rightly accepted."

It is true that this corrector of the public morals could only point to a pretence of works among his own party, and in weighing his evidence against Luther allowance must be made for his prejudice against him. Still, his words give some idea of the character of the protests made against the Wittenberg preachers in the prints of that time. He approves of the marriage of the clergy who had joined Luther's party, and refuses to open his eyes to what was taking place among the Anabaptists themselves: "They" [your preachers], he says, "threaten and force the poor people by fair, or rather foul and tyrannical, means, to feed their prostitutes, for these clerical fellows judge it better to keep a light woman than a wedded wife, because they are anxious about their external appearance. . . . Such declare that whoever accuses them of keeping prostitutes lies like a scoundrel. . . . But if such are not the worst fornicators and knaves, let the fiend fly away with me. I often wonder whether the devil is ever out of temper now, for he has the whole of the preacher folk on his side; on their part there has been nothing but deception." Were the people to seize the preachers "by the scruff of their neck" on account of their wickedness, then they would call themselves martyrs, and say that Christ had foretold their persecution; true enough the other mad priests [the Catholics] were "clearly messengers and satellites of the devil"; nevertheless he could not help being angered by Luther's "rich, uncouth, effeminate, whoremongering mob of preachers," who were so uncharitable in their ways and "who yet pretended to be Christians."[1]

It is obvious that Ickelsamer and his party went too far when they asserted that not one man who led an honest life was to be found among the Lutheran preachers, for in reality there was no lack of well-meaning men who, like Willibald Pirkheimer and Albrecht Dürer, were bent on making use of their powers in the interests of what they took to be the pure Gospel. This, however, was less frequently the case with the apostate priests and monks. The thoughts of the impartial historian revert of their own accord to the moral disorders prevalent in the older Church. We are not at liberty to ignore the fact that it was impossible for the Catholics at that time to point to any shining examples on their side which might have shamed the Lutherans. They

[1] "Clag etlicher Brüder" (above, p. 126, n. 5), p. 47.

were obliged to admit that the abuses rampant in clerical and monastic life had, as a matter of fact, prepared the way for and facilitated the apostasy of many of those who went over to Luther and became preachers of the new faith. The Church had to lament not only the fate of those who turned their back on her, but the earlier decay of many of her own institutions; under the influence of the spirit of the age this decay was hourly growing worse. At the same time the secession of so many undesirable elements was itself a reason for not despairing of recovery.

A great contrast to the lives of the apostate monks and clergy is nevertheless presented in an account which has been preserved by one of the adherents of the new faith of the conditions prevailing in certain monasteries where the friars, true to the Rule of their founder, kept their vows in the right spirit. The Franciscan Observants of the Province of Higher Germany were then governed by Caspar Schatzgeyer, a capable Bavarian Friar Minor, and, notwithstanding many difficulties, numbered in 1523 no less than 28 friaries and 560 members. In the course of the fifteenth century the Franciscan Observantines had spread far and wide as a result of the reform inaugurated within the Order and approved of by Rome. The Franciscan foundations at Heidelberg, Basle, Tübingen, Nuremberg, Mayence, Ulm, Ingoldstadt, Munich and other cities had one after the other made common cause with the Observants and, unlike the Coventuals, observed the old Rule in all its primitive strictness.

It was Johann Eberlin of Günzburg, a Franciscan who had apostatised to Lutheranism, who, in 1523, in a tract "Against those spurious clergymen of the Christian flock known as barefooted friars or Franciscans," was compelled to bear witness to the pure and mortified life of these monks with whom he was so well acquainted, though he urges that the devil was artfully using for his own purposes their piety, which was altogether devoid of true faith, "in order to entangle the best and most zealous souls in the meshes of his diabolical net." "They lead a chaste life in words, works and behaviour," says Eberlin, speaking of them generally; "if amongst a hundred one should act otherwise, this is not to be wondered at. If he transgresses [in the matter of chastity], he is severely punished as a warning to others. Their rough grey frock and hempen girdle, the absence of boots, breeches, vest, woollen or linen shirt, their not being allowed to bathe, being obliged to sleep in their clothes and not on

feather-beds but on straw, their fasts which last half the year, their lengthy services in choir, etc., all this shows everyone that they have little or no care for their own body. Their simplicity in dress and adornment, their great obedience, their not assuming any titles at the University however learned they may be, their seldom riding or driving luxuriously, shows that they are not desirous of pomp or honour. Their possessing nothing, whether in common or individually, their taking no money and refusing even to touch it, their not extorting offerings or dues from the people, but living only on alms with which the people supply them of their own accord; this shows their contempt for the riches of the world. The world is astonished at these men who do not indulge in any of the pleasures of feminine company, or in eating and drinking—for they fast much and never eat flesh meat—or in soft clothing, or long sleep, etc. Hence the world believes them to be more than human; it also sees how these virtuous men preach and hear confessions, scare others from sin, exhort them to virtue, move them to fear hell and God's judgments, and to desire the Kingdom of Heaven; ever with the Word of God and His judgments on their lips, so that they appear to be well-versed in Scripture, and to be carrying out in their whole life and practice what they teach. . . . Countless godly men have entered this state; from all ranks, places and countries, people have hastened to join this Order; every corner of Christendom is full of Franciscan friaries."[1]

3. Reaction of the Apostasy on its Author. His Private Life (1522–1525)

The moral results of Luther's undertaking and its effect upon himself have been very variously represented. The character of the originator of so gigantic a movement in the realm of ideas could not escape experiencing deeply the reaction of the events in progress; yet the opinion even of his contemporaries concerning Luther's morals in the critical years immediately preceding his marriage differ widely, according to the view they take of his enterprise. While by his adherents he is hailed as a second Elias,[2] some of his opponents do not hesitate to accuse him of the worst moral aberrations. Ickelsamer, however, one of the spokesmen of the "fanatics," who did not scruple to raise an angry voice against Luther's preachers, and even against Luther himself, was unable to adduce against him any

[1] "Wider die falsch scheynende, usw." No place, 1524. A³b. A⁴ab. In N. Paulus, "Johann Wild" ("3. Vereinsschrift der Görresgesellschaft für 1893"), p. 3 f.

[2] See below, p. 134, n. 4, and p. 163.

evidence of sexual misconduct during those years. It is also very remarkable that Ickelsamer's friend, Thomas Münzer, in his violent and bitter controversial attack upon Luther dating from that time, was also unable to bring forward charges of immorality. Both would doubtless have gladly availed themselves of any offences against the moral code of which Luther might have been guilty between 1522 and 1524, but in spite of their watchfulness they failed to detect any such.

Nevertheless, accusations of Ickelsamer's, in which he speaks more in detail of Luther's "faulty life," are not lacking.

He finds fault with his "defiant teaching and his wilful disposition," also with the frightful violence of the abuse with which in his writings he overwhelms his adversaries; recklessly and defiantly he flung abroad books filled with blasphemies. He blames him for the proud and tyrannical manner in which he sets up a "Papal Chair" for himself so as to suppress without mercy the new teachers who differ from him. Concerning his administration, he admits that Luther "exerted himself vigorously to put down evil living, in which efforts it was easy to detect the working of the Christian faith," but he adds that the "public fornication" of certain masters and college fellows, as well as others who were in high favour, was winked at;[1] he, Ickelsamer, would say of the Wittenberg Professors what had long before been said of Rome: the nearer they live to Wittenberg the worse Christians are. He also reminds Luther of the "scandal and offence" the latter had given him by his excuses for the "mad and immoral goings on" at Wittenberg: "You said, 'We can't be angels.'" Of his private life he merely remarks that it annoyed him that Luther, "neglectful of so many urgent matters," "could sit in the pleasant room overlooking the water," "drinking cheerfully," "among the beer-swillers." Finally, with the usual hypocritical severity of the Anabaptists, he reproaches him concerning other matters, his extravagance in dress, and the pomp displayed at the promotion of Doctors.[2]

Thomas Münzer in his violent "Schutzrede"[3] speaks at great length of Luther's pride, who, he says, wished to be a new Pope while making a show of humility; he "excited and urged on the people like a hound of hell," though protesting that he did not wish to raise a revolt, "like a serpent that glides over the rocks." Luther, in the very title of his work, he describes, as "that dull, effeminate lump of flesh at Wittenberg." In the course of

[1] Clag (above, p. 126, n. 5), p. 48. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] "Hochverursachte Schutzrede und Antwort wider das geistlose sanftlebende Fleisch zu Wittenberg," ed. Enders (see above, p. 126, n. 5), p. 29 ff.

the same work he speaks of him scornfully as "Martin, the virgin," and exclaims, "Ah, the chaste Babylonian virgin." He classes him, on account of his sermons on "freedom," with those teachers "who are pleasing to the world, which likes an easy life"; he speaks of him sarcastically as a "new Christ" with a "fine subject for his preaching," viz. "that priests may take wives."[1] He does not accuse him of any particular moral excess, but nevertheless remarks that "the disgraced monk" was not likely to suffer very severely under the persecution of which he boasted "when enjoying good Malvasian and feasting with light women."[2] The latter allusion probably refers merely to Luther's love of a good dinner, and his merry ways at his meals, which, to a strict Anabaptist like Münzer, seemed as deserving of execration as feasting with dissolute women.

It has recently been asserted by an eminent Protestant controversialist that Luther's contemporaries never accused him of moral laxity or of offences against chastity, and that it was only after his death that people ventured to bring forward such charges; so long as he lived "the Romans," so we read, "accused him of one only deed against the sixth commandment, viz. with his marriage"; Pistorius, Ulenberg and "Jesuits like Weislinger who copied them," were the first to enter the lists with such accusations.

To start with, we may remark that Weislinger was not a Jesuit and that Ulenberg does not mention any moral offence committed by Luther apart from his matrimony. In fact the whole statement of the controversialist just quoted must be treated as a legend. As a matter of fact, serious charges regarding this matter were brought against Luther even in his lifetime and in the years previous to his union with Catherine von Bora.

In 1867 a less timorous Protestant writer, who had studied Luther's history, brought forward the following passage from a manuscript letter written in 1522 by a Catholic, Count Hoyer von Mansfeld, to Count Ulrich von Helfenstein: "He had been a good Lutheran before that time and at Worms, but had come to see that Luther was a thorough scoundrel, who drank deeply, as was the custom at Mansfeld, liked the company of beautiful women, played the lute and led a frivolous life; therefore he [the Count]

[1] "Hochverursachte Schutzrede und Antwort wider das geistlose sanftlebende Fleisch zu Wittenberg," ed. Enders, p. 31.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

had abandoned his cause."[1] From that time Hoyer von Mansfeld resolutely opposed Luther, caused a disputation to be held against him in 1526, and, to the end of his life (1540), kept a part of the Mansfeld estates loyal to the Catholic faith. Hoyer was an opponent of Luther when he wrote the above, but he must have received a very bad impression of Luther's private life during the period subsequent to the latter's stay at the Wartburg if this was the reason of his deserting Luther's cause. It is conceivable that at the time of the Diet of Worms, when Hoyer declares he was still a "good Lutheran," the contrast between Luther's behaviour and the monastic habits of his earlier life had not yet become so conspicuous. (See above, p. 79.) After his stay at the Wartburg and subsequent to his attacks both literary and practical on the vow of chastity and on celibacy, a change such as that which Hoyer so distinctly refers to may have taken place. Wittenberg, the rallying point of so many questionable allies and escaped nuns in search of a refuge, was, in view of Luther's social, not to say jovial, disposition, scarcely a suitable place for him. His want of self-restraint and the levity of his bearing were censured at that time by others, and even by Melanchthon. (See below, p. 144.)

The following year, 1523, after the arrival at Wittenberg of the nuns who had been "liberated" from their convents, there is no doubt that grave, though grossly exaggerated reports, unfavourable to Luther's life and behaviour, were circulated both in Catholic circles and at the Court of Ferdinand the German King. Luther's attacks upon the Church caused these reports to be readily accepted. An echo from the Court reached Luther's ears, and he gives some account of it in a letter of January 14, 1524. According to this, it had been said in the King's surroundings "that he frequented the company of light women, played dice and spent his time in the public-houses"; also that he was fond of going about armed and accompanied by a stately retinue; likewise, that he occupied a post of honour at the Court of

[1] In an anonymous review, important on account of its original matter, of Burkhardt's "Briefwechsel Luthers" ("Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung," 1867, Beilage, No. 18). Unfortunately, the learned expert, who takes Luther's part, does not mention the source whence the above passage is taken. It appears to occur in some unprinted MS.

his sovereign Prince. The tale regarding his bearing arms and occupying posts of honour Luther was able easily to repudiate by the testimony of his friends. He also confidently declared the remaining statements to be merely lies.[1]

Proof is wanting to substantiate the charge of "fornication" contained in a letter written from Rome by Jacob Ziegler to Erasmus on February 16, 1522. Ziegler there relates that he had been invited by a bishop to dinner and that the conversation turned on Luther: "The opinion was expressed that he was given to fornication and tippling, vices to which the Germans were greatly addicted."[2] Abroad, and more particularly in the great Catholic centres, such reports met with a more favourable reception than elsewhere. The Germans were always held up as examples of drunkenness, and, regarding Luther, such accusations were at a later date certainly carried too far. (See vol. iii., xvii. 7, "The Good Drink.")

In order to judge objectively of Luther's behaviour, greater stress must be laid upon the circumstances which imposed caution and reticence upon him than has been done so far by his accusers.

Luther, both at that time and later, frequently declared that he himself, as well as his followers, must carefully avoid every action which might give public scandal and so prejudice the new Evangel, seeing that his adversaries were kept well informed of everything that concerned him. He ever endeavoured to live up to this principle, for on this his whole undertaking to some extent depended. "The eyes of the whole world are on us," he cries in a sermon in 1524.[3] "We are a spectacle to the whole world," he says; "therefore how necessary it is that our word should be blameless, as St. Paul demands (Tit. ii. 8)!"[4] "In order that worthless men may have no opportunity to blaspheme," he

[1] To Spalatin, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 278: "*Quod scortis, aleis, tabernis vacarem. . . . Mendaciis satis sum assuetus.*"

[2] "*Summa sententia erat, scortatorem eum esse et compotorem, qualibus viciis fere laborarent Germani.*" "Archiv für Reformationsgesch," 3, 1905, p. 79.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 774.

[4] To Spalatin, August 15, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 218: "*Orbis theatrum sumus,*" etc. Cp. 1 Corinthians iv. 9: "*Spectaculum facti sumus mundo et angelis et hominibus.*"

refuses later, for instance, to accept anything at all as a present out of the Church property of the bishopric of Naumburg,[1] and he reprimands a drunken relative, sternly admonishing him: On your account I am evil spoken of; my foes seek out everything that concerns me; therefore it was his duty, Luther tells him, "to consider his family, the town he lived in, the Church and the Gospel of God."[2] Mathesius also relates the following remark made by Luther when advanced in years: "Calumniators overlook the virtues of great men, but where they see a fault or stain in any, they busy themselves in raking it up and making it known." "The devil keeps a sharp eye on me in order to render my teaching of bad repute or to attach some shameful stain to it."[3]

In 1521 Luther thinks he is justified in giving himself this excellent testimonial: "During these three years so many lies have been invented about me, as you know, and yet they have all been disproved." "I think that people ought to believe my own Wittenbergers, who are in daily intercourse with me and see my life, rather than the tales of liars who are not even on the spot." His life was a public one, he said, and he was at the service of all; he worked so hard that "three of my years are really equal to six."[4]

His energy in work was not to be gainsaid, but it was just his numerous writings produced in the greatest haste and under the influence of passion which led his mind further and further from the care of his spiritual life, and thus paved the way for certain other moral imperfections; here, also, we see one of the effects of the struggle on his character. At the same time he exposed himself to the danger of acquiring the customs and habits of thought of so many of his followers and companions, who had joined his party not from higher motives but for reasons of the basest sort.

[1] To Amsdorf, February 12, 1542, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 434.
[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 185.
[3] "Historien," 1566, p. 154. Cp. "Lauterbachs Tagebuch," p. 121, and "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 420.
[4] "Auff des Bocks zu Leypczick Antwort," "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, pp. 273, 275; Erl. ed., 27, pp. 208, 210, 211. For the manner in which his pupils at Wittenberg praised him, see below, p. 157 f. Erasmus's eulogy on his manner of life is also an echo from the circle of his enthusiastic friends; see xiv. 3.

In 1522 Johannes Fabri writes of the moral atmosphere surrounding Luther and his methods of work: "I am well aware, my Luther, that your only object was to gain the favour of many by this concession [the marriage of priests], and as a matter of fact, you have succeeded in doing so." Why, he asks, did you not rather, "by your writings and exhortations, induce the priests who had fallen into sin to give up their concubines?" "I see you make it your business to tell the people what will please them in order to increase the number of your supporters. . . . You lay pillows under the heads of those who, from the moral standpoint, are snoring in a deep sleep and you know how difficult, nay dangerous, it is for me and those who think as I do, to oppose the doctrine which you teach."[1]

That his work was leading him on the downward path and threatened to extinguish his interior religious life, Luther himself admitted at that time, though in some of his other statements he declares that his zeal in God's service had been promoted by the struggle. He confesses in 1523, for instance, to the Zwickau Pastor Nicholas Hausmann, whom he esteemed very highly, that his interior life was "drying up," and concludes: "Pray for me that I may not end in the flesh." He is here alluding to the passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians where he warns the latter, lest having begun in the spirit they should end in the flesh.[2] This Pastor was a spiritual friend to whom, owing to his esteem for him, he confided much, though his confessions must not always be taken too literally.

The well-known incident of the flight of the nuns from the convent at Nimbschen, and their settling in Wittenberg, was looked upon by Luther and his followers as a matter of the greatest importance. The apostasy of the twelve nuns, among whom was Catherine von Bora, opened the door of all the other convents, as Luther expressed it, and demonstrated publicly what must be done "on behalf of the salvation of souls."[3] Some of these nuns, as was frequently the case, had entered the Cistercian convent near Grimma,

[1] "Opus adv. nova quædam et a christiana religione prorsus aliena dogmata M. Lutheri," Romæ, Q 3a. R 2b.: "*Ponis cervicalia sub capita eorum, qui stertunt,*" etc.

[2] Letter of May 24, 1523, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 144; Gal. iii. 3.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 559. See the text in the work mentioned, p. 137, n. 1.

without a vocation, or had gradually become disgusted with their state owing to long-continued tepidity and want of fidelity to their profession. They had contrived to place themselves in communication with Luther, who, as he admits later in a public writing, himself arranged for them to be carried away by force, seeing that their relatives would do nothing. The plan was put into effect by one of the town councillors of Torgau, Leonard Koppe, aided by two other citizens of that town. Koppe had shortly before displayed heroic energy and skill in an attack upon a poor convent; with sixteen young comrades he had stormed the Franciscan friary at Torgau on the night of Ash Wednesday, 1523, thrown the monks who offered any resistance over the wall and smashed the windows, doors and furniture.[1] At the close of the Lenten season of the same year he signalised himself by this new exploit at Nimbschen.

On the Saturday in Holy Week, 1523, agreeably with an arrangement made beforehand with the apostate nuns, he made his appearance in the courtyard of the convent with an innocent-looking covered van, in which the nuns quietly took their places. As the van often came to the convent with provisions, no one noticed their flight. So runs the most authentic of the various accounts, some of them of a romantic nature, viz. that related by a chronicler of Torgau who lived about the year 1600.[2] Koppe brought the fugitives straight to Wittenberg, where they were safe. After a while they were received into different families in the town, or were fetched away by their relatives. Thus set free from their "bonds" on that memorable day of the Church's year, they celebrated their so-called "resurrection."

Luther declared, in a circular letter concerning this occurrence, that as Christ, the risen One, had, like a triumphant robber, snatched his prey from the Prince of this world, so also Leonard Koppe might be termed "a blessed robber." All who were on God's side would praise the rape of the nuns as a "great act of piety, so that you may rest

[1] See proofs given in the "Katholik," 1892, 2, p. 421 f., in the article by P. A. Kirsch.

[2] Cp. E. Kroker, "Katharina v. Bora," Leipzig, 1906, p. 36 f., where the legends are ably criticised.

assured that God has ordained it and that it is not your work or your conception."[1]

The twelve nuns were, as Amsdorf writes to Spalatin on April 4, "pretty, and all of noble birth, and among them I have not found one who is fifty years old. . . . I am sorry for the girls; they have neither shoes nor dresses." Amsdorf praises the patience and cheerfulness of the "honourable maidens," and recommends them through Spalatin to the charity of the Court. One, namely the sister of Staupitz, who was no longer so youthful, he at once offers in marriage to Spalatin, though he admits he has others who are prettier. "If you wish for a younger one, you shall have your choice of the prettiest."[2]

Soon after this three other nuns were carried off by their relatives from Nimbschen. Not long after, sixteen forsook the Mansfeld convent of Widerstett, five of whom were received by Count Albert of Mansfeld. Luther reported this latter event with great joy to the Court Chaplain, Spalatin, and at the same time informed him that the apostate Franciscan, François Lambert of Avignon, had become engaged to a servant girl at Wittenberg. His intention, and Amsdorf's too, was to coax Spalatin into matrimony and the violation of his priestly obligation of celibacy. "It is a strange spectacle," he writes; "what more can befall to astonish us, unless you yourself at length follow our example, and to our surprise appear in the guise of a bridegroom? God brings such wonders to pass, that I, who thought I knew something of His ways, must set to work again from the very beginning. But His Holy Will be done, Amen."[3]

Luther at that time was not in a happy frame of mind. He knew what was likely to be his experience with the escaped monks and nuns. The trouble and waste of time, as well as the serious interruption to his work, which, as he complains, was occasioned by the religious who had left their

[1] In the writing, "Ursach und Anttwortt das Jungkfrawen Kloster gottlich verlassen mugen," which Luther sent on April 10, 1523, in the form of a circular letter to Leonard Koppe. "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 394 ff.; Erl. ed., 29, p. 33 ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 132).

[2] Kolde, "Analecta Luth.," p. 443.

[3] On June 24, 1523, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 169.

convents, appeared to him relatively insignificant.[1] The large sums of money which, as he remarks, he had to "throw away on runaway monks and nuns," he might also have overlooked, as he was not avaricious.[2] Yet the disorders introduced by the arrival of so many people bent on matrimony were distasteful to him. In a letter to Spalatin, July 11, 1523, this complaint escapes him: "I am growing to hate the sight of these renegade monks who collect here in such numbers; what annoys me most is that they wish to marry at once, though they are of no use for anything. I am seeking a means to put an end to it."[3] The good name of his undertaking seemed to him to be at stake. On the occasion of the marriage of a Court preacher to a very old but wealthy woman, a match which was much talked about, he complains bitterly that the step was a disgrace to the Evangel; the miserly bridegroom was "betraying himself and us."[4]

Above we have heard him speak of the monks who were desirous of marrying; he was more indulgent to the nuns who had come to Wittenberg. According to Melanchthon's account he entered into too frequent and intimate relationship with them. (See below.)

Of the twelve who escaped from Nimbschen, nine, who were without resources, found a refuge in various houses at Wittenberg, while only three went to their relatives in the Saxon Electorate. To begin with, from necessity and only for a short time, the nine found quarters in the Augustinian monastery which had remained in Luther's hands, in which he still dwelt and where there was plenty of room; later they found lodgings in the town. Luther had to provide in part for their maintenance. Catherine von Bora was lodged by him in the house of the Town-clerk, Reichenbach.

There was no longer any question of monastic seclusion for those quondam nuns, or for the others who had taken refuge at Wittenberg. Bora started a love affair in 1523 with Hieronymus Baumgärtner, a young Nuremberg

[1] To Johann Œcolampadius, June 20, 1523, *ibid.*, p. 164: "*Moniales et monachi egressi mihi multas horas furantur, ut omnium necessitati serviam.*"

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 560. [3] "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 177 f.

[4] To Spalatin, September 19, 1523, *ibid.*, p. 233.

patrician; he, however, married another girl in the commencement of 1525.[1] Christian, the exiled King of Denmark, made her acquaintance during his stay at Wittenberg in October, 1523; she showed, at a later date, a ring he had presented to her. In 1524 she was to have been married to Dr. Glatz, then Pastor of Orlamünde, in consequence of Luther's stern and repeated urging. She let it, however, be understood that she looked higher, refused Glatz's proposal, and announced quite frankly to Amsdorf that she would give her hand only to Luther himself, or to Amsdorf, his confidant. Amsdorf was not to be allured into matrimony, and remained single all his life. Luther, on the other hand, was also not then desirous of marrying and, besides, stood rather in awe of a certain haughtiness of bearing which was said to be noticeable in her, and which was attributed to her aristocratic descent.

Had he wished to marry at that time Luther, as he declared later, would have preferred one of the other nuns, viz. Ave von Schönfeld, who, however, eventually married a young physician who was studying at Wittenberg. He also speaks on one occasion, at a later date, of a certain Ave Alemann, a member of a Magdeburg family, as his one-time "bride," but simply, as it seems, because Amsdorf had proposed her to him as a wife. Confirmed bachelor as he was, Amsdorf appears to have developed at that time a special aptitude for arranging matches.

Luther's intercourse with his female guests at Wittenberg naturally gave rise to all sorts of tales among his friends, the more so as he was very free and easy in the company of women, and imposed too little restraint upon his conduct. When it was said, even outside Wittenberg circles, that he would marry, he replied, on November 30, 1524, that, according to his present ideas, this would not happen, "not as though I do not feel my flesh and my sex, for I am neither of wood nor of stone, but I have no inclination to matrimony."[2]

He was all the more zealous, however, in urging others, his friend Spalatin in particular, to this step. Spalatin once jokingly reproved him for this, saying he was surprised he did not set the example, being so anxious to induce others

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, I, p. 728 ff.
[2] To Spalatin, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 77.

to marry. To this friendly poke Luther replied with a strange admixture of jest and earnest. He wrote to him, on April 16, 1525, that, notwithstanding the fact that he himself was far removed from thoughts of marriage, yet, after all, as God was wont to bring the unexpected to pass, it might well be that of the two he would be the first to wed. He also speaks of himself jestingly as a "famous lover." It was doubtless surprising, he says, that he, such a famous lover, had not married, though, as he wrote so frequently about marriage and had so much to do with women (*misceor feminis*), it was still more astonishing that he had not long ago become a woman.[1] The letter, which has been much discussed in recent times, is not to be taken seriously; here it is that he speaks, with misplaced pleasantry, of the "three wives" whom he had already had on his arm.

This letter calls, however, for some further observations.

It is hard to believe that Luther, in an everyday letter to a friend, should have spoken in earnest of a previous connection of his with three women at once. Is it likely that he would accuse himself of such intercourse, and that in a letter to a man whose good opinion of himself and his work he was in every way careful to preserve?

We are not here concerned with the question whether such jests were suitable, coming from a reformer of faith and morals, yet they certainly do not, as has been thought, contain anything of a nature to compromise him in his relations with the escaped nuns.

That Luther is jesting is plain from the conclusion: "Joking apart, I say all this in order to urge you on to what you are striving after [viz. marriage]. Farewell." Hence it is clear that what precedes was said as a joke.

He chose to make the matter one of jest because he fancied that thus he could best answer Spalatin's objection against his former invitation to him to marry. The latter had retorted: "Why am I expected to start? Set the example yourself by your own marriage!" Luther thereupon replied in the following terms:

"As for your observations about my marriage, do not be surprised that I, who am such a famous lover (*famosus amator*), do not proceed to matrimony. It is still more remarkable that I, who write so frequently concerning marriage and have so much to do with women (*sic misceor feminis*), have not become a woman long since, not to mention the fact that I have not as yet even taken one to wife. Still, if you want my example, here you have a forcible one, for I have had three wives at one time (*tres simul uxores habui*) and loved them so desperately that I lost

[1] On April 16, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 157.

two who will get other bridegrooms; as for the third I can hardly keep hold of her with my left arm, and she too will perhaps soon be snatched away from me. But you, you slothful lover, you do not even venture to become the husband of one wife. Take care, however, lest I [though still in spirit disinclined to marriage] do not nevertheless outstrip you people who are all ready for the wedding, for God is wont to bring to pass what we least expect." Then follow the words already mentioned, introduced by the formula: "Joking apart."

These rather unseasonable words were written in a merry mood on Easter Sunday, just as Luther was on the point of leaving Wittenberg for Eisleben. As Luther had not yet made up his mind whether to marry or not, he evaded Spalatin's invitation to do so immediately with the jest about being a "famous lover," words probably applied to him by Spalatin in the letter to which this is an answer. He means to say: As a famous lover I have already given you the encouraging example you desire, and the proof of this is to be found in the "three women I loved so deeply as to lose them." This refers doubtless to three aspirants to matrimony with whom Spalatin was acquainted, and whom common report had designated as likely to wed Luther; who they actually were we do not know. Some Protestants have suggested Ave Alemann and Ave Schönfeld (see above p. 139). The first, a native of Magdeburg, had been presented to Luther during his stay in that town as a likely wife. He would have preferred the second. But of neither could he have said in his letter that they would shortly have other bridegrooms, for Alemann had been married some time, and Schönfeld had to wait long for a spouse. Thus it is incorrect to class them amongst the "three wives," and these must be sought among others who had intercourse with Luther. The third, at any rate, seems to have been Catherine von Bora, who was stopping at that time in Wittenberg and actually was engaged on matrimonial plans.

In any case, the husband who loses three wives through his "too great love" is a joke on a par with the wonder expressed by Luther, that, after having written so much about marriage and had so much to do with women, he had not himself been turned into a woman.

In his not very choice pleasantries when referring to the intercourse with women which resulted from his writings, Luther makes use of a very equivocal expression, for "*misceor feminis*," taken literally in the context in which it stands, would imply sexual commerce with women, which is not at all what the writer intends to convey. It cannot be denied that the jest about the three women and the ambiguous word "*misceor*," are out of place and not in keeping with the gravity and moral dignity which we might expect from a man of Luther's position. Such jests betray a certain levity of character, nor can we see how certain Lutherans can describe the letter as "scrupulously decorous."

It is nevertheless true, and more particularly of this letter, that the unrestrained humour which so often breaks out in Luther's writings must be taken into account in order to judge fairly of what he says ; it is only in this way that we are able to interpret him rightly. Owing to the fact that the jocose element which, in season and out of season, so frequently characterises Luther's manner of speaking is lost sight of, his real meaning is often misunderstood.

Just as he had urged his friend Spalatin, so, though in more serious language, Luther exhorts the Elector Albert, Archbishop of Mayence, to matrimony.

This alone should be a sufficient reason for him, he writes, namely, that he is a male ; " for it is God's work and will that a man should have a wife. . . . Where God does not work a miracle and make of a man an angel, I cannot see how he is to remain without a wife, and avoid God's anger and displeasure. And it is a terrible thing should he be found without a wife at the hour of death." He points out to him that the downfall of the whole clergy is merely a question of time, since priests are everywhere scoffed at ; " priests and monks are caricatured on every wall, on every bill, and even on the playing cards." The sanguinary peasant risings which were commencing are also made to serve his ends ; God is punishing His people in this way because " the bishops and princes will not make room for the evangel " ; the Archbishop ought therefore to follow the " fine example " given recently by the " Grand Master in Prussia," i.e. marry, and " turn the bishopric into a temporal principality."[1]

This letter was printed in 1526. Dr. Johann Rühel received instructions to sound the Archbishop as to his views and seek to influence him. It is a well-known fact that Albert was more a temporal potentate than an ecclesiastical dignitary, and that his reputation was by no means spotless.

Archbishop Albert was said to have asked Dr. Rühel, or some other person, why Luther himself did not take a wife, seeing that he " was inciting everyone else to do so." Should he say this again, Luther writes to Rühel, " You are to reply that I have always feared I was not fit for it. But if my marriage would be a help to his Electoral Grace, I should very soon be ready to prance along in front of him as an example to his Electoral Grace ; before quitting this life I purpose in any case to enter into matrimony, which I regard as enjoined by God, even should it be nothing more than an espousal, or Joseph's marriage."[2] In what way he feared " not to be fit " for marriage, or why he contemplated nothing more than a " Joseph's marriage," Luther

[1] June 2, 1525, " Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 402 ff. ; Erl. ed., 53, p. 308 ff. (" Briefwechsel," 5, p. 186). Albert made no reply. On June 2, the very same day, the peasants were victorious at Königshofen.

[2] Letter of June 3, 1525, " Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 313 (" Briefwechsel," 5, p. 189).

does not say. A "Joseph's marriage" was certainly not calculated to satisfy the demands which he himself was accustomed to make, in the name of nature, concerning conjugal life. At any rate, his observation to Dr. Rühel is very remarkable, as being one of the first indications of his approaching marriage.

At this critical period of his life the free and unrestrained tone which he had employed at an earlier date becomes unpleasantly conspicuous in his letters, writings and sermons. It is sufficient to read the passages in his justification of the nuns' flight where he treats of his pet conviction, viz. the need of marrying, in words which, from very shame, are not usually repeated. "Scandal, or no scandal," he concludes his dissertation on the nuns who had forsaken their vow of chastity, "necessity breaks even iron and gives no scandal!"[1] He had already once before complained that our ears have become "much purer than the mouth of the Holy Ghost," referring to certain sexual matters spoken of very openly in the Old Testament.[2] He himself, however, paid little heed to such conventions, and, especially when jesting, delighted to set them at defiance.

Many passages already quoted from his letters to friends prove this. The "*misceor feminis*" and the "three wives" on his hands were unbecoming jokes. Kawerau, the historian of Luther, admits the "cynicism of his language"[3] and this unpleasing quality, which is more particularly noticeable when he becomes abusive, is also to be met with even elsewhere, especially in the years which we are now considering.

Luther, for instance, jocosely speaks of himself as a virgin, "*virgo*," and, in a letter to Spalatin where he refers playfully to his own merry and copious tippling at a christening at Schweinitz, he says: "These three virgins were present [Luther, Jonas and his wife], certainly Jonas [as a virgin], for as he has no child we call him the virgin."[4] Jonas, one of the priests who married, had celebrated his nuptials February 22, 1522.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 400; Erl. ed., 29, p. 41, in "Ursach und Anttwortt das Jungkfrawen Kloster gottlich verlassen mugen."

[2] *Ibid.*, 10, 1, p. 692; Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 450, in the Tract against the state of chastity, embodied in the "Postils."

[3] "Luther und seine Gegner, Vortrag," 1903, p. 14. Here it is true the cynicism is regarded as an "expression of his moral annoyance" with the supporters of celibacy, who themselves led immoral lives.

[4] On March 8, 1523, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 96.

On account of his habit of making fun Luther's friends called him a "merry boon companion."

No one could, of course, blame his love of a joke, but his jokes were sometimes very coarse; for instance, that concerning his friend Jonas in his letter of February 10, 1525, to Spalatin, of which the tone is indelicate, to say the least, even if we make all allowance for the age and for the customs in vogue among the Wittenberg professors. Jonas, he there says, was accustomed to write his letters on paper which had served the basest of services; he (Luther) was, however, more considerate for his friends. "Farewell," he concludes, "and give my greetings to the fat husband Melchior [Meirisch, the stout Augustinian Prior of Dresden, who had married on February 6]; my wishes for him are, that his wife may prove very obedient; she really ought to drag him by the hair seven times a day round the market-place and, at night, as he richly deserves, '*bene obtundat connubialibus verbis*.'"[1]

The reference in this letter to Carlstadt and his "familiar demon" (a fanatical monk who was given to prophesying) calls to mind the indecent language in which Luther assailed the Anabaptists and "fanatics" during those years. He makes great fun at the expense of the "nackte Braut von Orlamünde" and her amorous lovers, referring, in language which is the reverse of modest, to a ludicrous, mystical work produced by the "fanatics."[2]

Melanchthon is very severe in censuring Luther's free behaviour and coarse jests, especially when in the presence of ex-nuns. It has been pointed out by a Protestant that Luther's tendency to impropriety of language, though it cannot be denied, is easily to be explained by the fact of his being a "monk and the son of a peasant."[3] It is hard to see

[1] "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 123, on Jonas and his writing materials ("*schedas natales, hoc est de natibus purgatis*").

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 93; Erl. ed., 29, p. 169. According to these foes of his, it is, he says, "die rechten evangelischen Prediger, die der Braut von Orlamünde das Hembd und dem Bräutigam zu Naschhausen die Hosen ausziehen." *Ibid.*, p. 84=160: "Wie aber, wenn Braut und Bräutigam so züchtig wären, und behielten Hembd und Rock an? Es solle freilich nicht fast hindern, wenn sie sonst Lust zusammen hätten." Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 681.

[3] The explanation is Köstlin's, and is retained in the most recent edition by Kawerau, 1, p. 736.

what his being a monk has to do with it, and by what right the excesses which were perhaps noticeable in some few frivolous monks are to be regarded as characteristic of the religious state. Melanchthon's reproaches lead the same writer to say, this time with at least some show of reason, that his friend surpassed Luther in "delicacy of feeling."

Melanchthon, on June 16, 1525, in a confidential letter written in Greek to Camerarius about Luther's recent marriage, complains of his behaviour towards the runaway nuns then at Wittenberg: "The man," he says, "is light-hearted and frivolous (εὐχερής) to the last degree; the nuns pursued him with great cunning and drew him on. Perhaps all this intercourse with them has rendered him effeminate, or inflamed his passions, noble and high-minded though he is." Melanchthon desiderates in him more "dignity," and says that his friends ("we"), had frequently been obliged to reprove him for his buffoonery (βωμολοχία).[1]

In consequence of this unseemly behaviour with the nuns, blamed even by his intimate friends, we can understand that the professors of theology at Leipzig and Ingolstadt came to speak of Luther with great want of respect.

Hieronymus Dungersheim, the Leipzig theologian, who had before this had a tilt at Luther, wrote, with undisguised rudeness in his "Thirty Articles," against "the errors and heresies" of Martin Luther: "What are your thoughts when you are seated in the midst of the herd of apostate nuns whom you have seduced, and, as they themselves admit, make whatever jokes occur to you? You not only do not attempt to avoid what you declare is so hateful to you [the exciting of sensuality], but you intentionally stir up your own and others' passions. What are your thoughts when you recall your own golden words, either when sitting in such company, or after you have committed your wickedness? What can you reply, when reminded of your former conscientiousness, in view of such a scandalous life of deceit? I have heard what I will not now repeat, from those who had intercourse with you, and I could supply details and names. Out upon your morality and religion, out upon your obstinacy and blindness! How have you sunk from the pinnacle of perfection and true wisdom to the depths of depravity and abominable error, dragging down countless numbers with you! Where now is Tauler, where the 'Theologia Deutsch' from which you boasted you had received so much light? The 'Theologia'

[1] See the whole Greek letter below, p. 176. The passage αἱ μοναχαὶ πάσῃ μηχανῇ ἐπιβουλευομέναι προσέσπασαν αὐτόν, according to our opinion, conveys the sense attributed to it above. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, I, p. 736.

condemns as utterly wicked, nay, devilish through and through, all that you are now doing, teaching and proclaiming in your books. Glance at it again and compare. Alas, you 'theologian of the Cross!' What you now have to show is nothing but the filthiest wisdom of the flesh, that wisdom which, according to the Apostle Paul (Rom. viii. 6 f.), is the death of the soul and the enemy of God."

Dungersheim then quotes for his benefit the passage from the Epistle of St. James concerning the "earthly and devilish wisdom," notwithstanding that Luther treats this Epistle with contempt; his real reason for refusing to recognise it was that it witnessed so strongly against his teaching. "What will you say on the day of reckoning to the holy Father Augustine [the reputed founder of the Augustinians] and the other founders of Orders? They come accompanied by a countless multitude of the faithful of both sexes who have faithfully followed in the footsteps of Christ, and in the way of the evangelical counsels. But you, you have led astray and to destruction so many of their followers. All these will raise their voices against you on the dreadful Day of Judgment."[1]

The Leipzig University professor, in his indignation, refers Luther to the warning he himself (in his sermons on the Ten Commandments) had given against manners of talking and acting which tempt to impurity; he continues: "And now you set aside every feeling of shame, you speak and write of questionable subjects in such a disgraceful fashion that decent men, whether married or unmarried, cover their faces and fling away your writings with execration. In order to cast dishonour upon the brides of Christ you [in your writings], so to speak, lead unchaste men to their couches, using words which for very shame I cannot repeat."

He also answers his opponent's constant objection that without marriage, on account of the impulse of nature, people must needs be ever falling into sin. "You forget two things, viz. that grace is stronger than nature and that, as Augustine rightly teaches, no one sins without free consent. You exaggerate that impulse and speak of 'sin' merely to exonerate your own behaviour and your doctrine. In other matters you declare that everything is possible to him who believes. You, like all other Catholics, were formerly convinced that involuntary movements of the flesh are not sinful unless a man consents to them; they are to the good a cross rather than a fault, and frequently only

[1] *Articuli sive libelli triginta*, etc., art. 17, p. 81 *seq.*

come from the devil and are not imputed to them at all."[1]

This protest from Leipzig was reinforced in 1523 from Ingolstadt by Dr. Johann Eck, who kept a keen eye on Luther and pursued him with a sharp pen. In the following description of Luther his bitter opponent complains not only of the frivolous behaviour of the apostate monk in his former monastery which the Elector had made over to him, but above all of the untruth and dishonesty displayed in his writings. "More than once have I proved," he says, "that he is a liar and hence that he has for his father, him [the devil] of whom the Scripture says that he is a liar and a murderer." "The fellow exudes lies from every pore and is inconstancy itself (*homo totus mendaciis scatens nil constat*). His teaching too is full of deception and calumny. What he has just advanced, he presently rejects without the least difficulty." "The dregs of those vices of which he is always accusing the Christians, we rightly pour back upon his own head; let him drink himself of the cup he has mixed." "He heaps up a mountain of evil on the Pope and the Church," but with "his nun,"—this is what he adds in a later edition in his indignation with Luther's marriage—"he is really worshipping Asmodeus"; and this he is not ashamed to do in the old monastery of the Augustinians, "where once pious monks served the Lord God, and pious foundations, now alienated from their original purpose, proclaimed the Christian virtues to the faithful."[2]

It is no pleasant task to examine Luther's sermons and writings of those years, and to represent to ourselves the turmoil of his mind at the time directly preceding his marriage.

In 1524 he repeatedly discourses to his Wittenberg hearers on his favourite theme, i.e. that man cannot control himself in sexual matters, save by a miracle and with the help of an "exceedingly rare grace." Speaking of impotence, he says, that although he himself "by the grace of God does not desire a wife," yet he would not like, as a married man, to go through the experience of those who are impotent. If nature was not to be satisfied, "then death were preferable." "I have no need of a wife," he says, "but must provide a relief for your need."[3] This was perhaps his reply to those who said: "Oh, how the monk feels the weight of his frock, how glad he would be to have a wife!"[4]

[1] *Articuli sive libelli triginta*, etc., art. 17, p. 83.

[2] Conclusion of the Tract "De Purgatorio," "Opp.," Pars II, Ingolst., 1531, pp. 95′, 96. Cp. volume iv., xxii.: "Luther and Lying."

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 560 ff.

[4] See above, p. 87.

"Hitherto," he says, "the married state has been condemned and styled a sensual state. . . . Alas, would that all men were therein . . . in support of it we have the Word of God. . . . Those who have the grace to be chaste are few, and among a thousand there is scarcely one to be found."[1]

"I have frequently tried to be good," he says to his hearers in 1524, "but the more I try the less I succeed. See from this what free-will amounts to." And then, in excuse, he unfolds his theology. "Sin urges so greatly that we long for death. If to-day I avoid one sin, to-morrow comes another. We are obliged to fight without ceasing: the Kingdom of Christ admits all, provided only they fight and hold fast to the Head of the Kingdom, namely, [believe] that Christ is the Redeemer. But if we exalt works, then all is lost! . . . If we desire to attain to purity, this must not be done by works, but Christ must be born in us anew [by faith]. . . . Sin cannot harm ('*mordere*') us; the power of sin is at an end. We hold fast to Him who has conquered sin." "'*Summa, summarum*,' works or no works, all is comprised under faith and true doctrine. . . . But do not let us sleep meanwhile and lull ourselves into security."[2]

In 1523 Luther wrote on "the Devil's chastity," as he called it, an exposition of the 7th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, which the Papists used, so he says, as a "fig-leaf" for celibacy and the monastic state. In it he deals with the inspiring, spiritual teaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles in the chapter which commences with the words: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."[3]

This publication, which has been extolled as "the happy inauguration of a healthy love of the things of sense,"[4] was preceded in 1522 by his sermon "On conjugal life." We must here call to mind a similar earlier publication of 1519. When, on the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, he preached a "sermon on the conjugal state," this was at once printed

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 667.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 431, 437.
[3] "The 7th chapter," etc., "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 92 ff.
[4] In the dedication to Hans Loser zu Pretzsch, Hereditary Marshal of Saxony ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 199).

by some stranger from notes made. Many who read it were filled with astonishment at the unheard-of freedom of speech displayed. Very soon Luther's friend, Christoph Scheurl, expressed his disapproval of the tone: "I have read many of Martin's writings which appeal to his best friends more than his sermon on Matrimony, because they are pure, humble, modest, measured and earnest, as beseems a theologian."[1] After this letter Luther declared that the sermon had been printed without his knowledge, and with many stupid mistakes, so that he was "ashamed" of it,[2] and that same year (1519) he had it reprinted in an amended form.[3] It has been proved, however, that another sermon, which had been taken down and printed at the same time as the first sermon on Matrimony, was reported quite correctly;[4] hence the first printed edition of the sermon on Matrimony was probably not as inexact as Luther afterwards pretended.

When we come to examine the teaching contained in the sermon "On conjugal life" of the year 1522, we find, regarding the marriage tie, notwithstanding the protestation that marriage was to be considered sacred and indissoluble, such sentences as the following: "If the wife is stubborn and refuses to fulfil her duty as a wife," "it is time for the husband to say: If you refuse, another will comply; if the wife will not, then let the maid come." She is however to be reprimanded first "before the Church," and only then is the above counsel to be put in force: "If she refuses, dismiss her, seek an Esther and let Vasthi go. . . . The secular power must here either coerce the woman or make away with her. Where this is not done, the husband must act as though his wife had been carried off by brigands, or killed, and look out for another." In short, the marriage is dissolved, and the husband is at liberty to marry the

[1] On April 10, 1519, to Amsdorf; see Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 2, p. 16, n. 33.

[2] To Johann Lang, April 13, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 12.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 162 ff.; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 49 ff., 77 ff. In the Preface we read: "There is a great difference between bringing something to light by means of the living voice or by the dead letter" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 166). Of the marriages which were concluded secretly (see below) and which were then [previous to the Council of Trent] regarded as valid by the Church, he says here: "After one has secretly pledged his word to a woman and thereafter takes another, either publicly or secretly, I do not yet know whether all that is said and written on the subject is to be accepted or not."

[4] "*De duplici iustitia.*" Pastor Knaake remarks of the first edition of this sermon, that it is plain "what careful notes of the reformer's sermons were made even then." See "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 144.

maid.[1] We must not, however, overlook the fact that in other passages of the same sermon Luther gives some quite excellent advice, whether against evil desires, or for the exercise of patience in matrimony.

As one on whom the highest authority has been unconditionally conferred, he declares in the same sermon that he "rejects and condemns" almost all the matrimonial impediments or prohibitions invented by the Pope.[2] Virginity he refuses to reject absolutely, but nevertheless he declares: "It is true that he who does not marry must lead an immoral life, for how can it be otherwise?" "without a special grace" it is utterly impossible.[3]

According to his ideas, the duties incident to matrimony cannot be complied with without sin. "No conjugal duty can be performed without sin," he teaches in conclusion,[4] "though God by His mercy overlooks it"—a statement which certainly does not show any great esteem for matrimony, although Luther is under the impression that he is raising the union of man and wife to a higher plane. The Church had never taught that the use of matrimony, which she looked upon as based on the order of nature, involved any sin. Some few theologians had, it is true, spoken of venial sin as unavoidable here, but these were opposed by others, and, besides, the views of these theologians concerning sinfulness differed widely from those of Luther. Luther's erroneous notion that every feeling of concupiscence was sinful, indeed mortally sinful, caused him to see grievous sin even here.

In view of his severity in this matter, the freedom of speech which he retains even in the revised edition (1519), and his coarse treatment of the sexual subject is all the more surprising. His tendency to throw off the fetters of decency is at times quite needlessly offensive. Cochlæus remarks of this work: "Luther here speaks in the most filthy way of the intercourse between husband and wife, contrary to the laws of natural modesty."[5]

Others, and Cochlæus himself in his previous indecent writings, bear witness to the excess of coarseness of this sort which, partly as a consequence of Italian Humanism, had found its way into German literature at that time. Few, however, went so far as Luther. Several of his contemporaries told him so openly, though they were themselves accustomed to strong expressions. It is notorious that the sixteenth century was accustomed to speak more bluntly

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 290; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 526. For the explanation of the phrase, "If the wife will not, let the maid come," see volume iii., xvii. 6.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 280=515. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 309=537 f.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 304=541.

[5] "Commentaria," etc. Magunt., 1549, p. 61: "*Fœdissime contra naturalem pudorem loquitur de commixtione maris et fœminæ.*"

and openly than is at present usual. Yet in judging Luther's case a circumstance which is often overlooked should also be borne in mind, namely, that the standard by which he is to be tried is not that of profane authors and literary men of Humanistic leanings, but that of professedly religious writers. Luther not only professed to be a religious writer, but also gave himself out as the introducer of a great reform in faith and morals. From this standpoint the impropriety of his speech must assuredly be more severely judged. He employs by preference such language in his bitter and violent polemics, seeking to make an impression upon the lower classes by a naturalism not far removed from filthy talking. The vulgar figures of speech of which he makes use are all saturated with hate and rendered still more distasteful by the unclean aspersions he is ever casting on his adversaries; from his manner of writing we can gather the satisfaction he derives from seeing the defenders of virginity, the religious and clergy, thus overwhelmed with filth.

Certain preachers of the late Middle Ages, religious and others, for instance, Geiler von Kaysersberg, when dealing with sexual matters sometimes went very far in their plain speaking on the subject, yet their words were, without exception, characterised by gravity and the desire of saving souls. Their tone excludes any levity; indeed, the honesty and simplicity of these productions of the Middle Ages impress the reader at every turn; he may perhaps be inclined to extol the greater delicacy of feeling which obtains at the present day, but he will refrain from blaming the less covert style of days gone by. Luther's "cynical" language, however, impresses one as an attempt to pit nature, with all its brutality, with its rights and demands, against the more exalted moral aims of earlier ages; the trend of such language, as contemporary Catholics urged, was downwards rather than upwards.

One tract of Luther's, which dates from about that time, that "Against the Clerical State falsely so called of Pope and Bishops," contains a chapter "Concerning Vows,"[1] in which the descriptions are so coarse and the language so nasty that Staupitz might well have considered even his censure of certain earlier writings of Luther's not sufficiently strong: "Your works are praised," he had told him, "by

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 146 ff.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 186 ff.

those who keep houses of ill-fame,"[1] etc. Several particularly violent polemical tracts of those years, meant by Luther for his theological adversaries generally, are so brimful of words descriptive of the vilest parts and functions of the human body, that it would be impossible to match them in the writings of previous ages. His manner of speech was considered by his foes to have reached the lowest depths of thought and feeling. The vulgarity of his language was held to display the utter depravity of his mind.

In polemics Luther was not merely the "greatest, but also the coarsest writer of his century"; such is the opinion recently expressed by a Protestant historian.[2]

In the work dating from 1522, "Bulla Coenæ Domini, i.e. the Bull concerning the Evening feed of our most holy Lord, the Pope,"[3] he replies, with startling fluency, to the menaces of this Papal Bull against all heretics, including himself. Therein he describes the life and manners of the Roman "prostitutes" with the express intention of degrading all that Catholics considered most worthy of respect and veneration. The Pope and his followers he represents as indulging in every kind of sensuality, "rape, seduction and fornication" to their heart's content.

Still more degrading are the opprobrious and insulting figures of which he makes use in 1522 in his furious reply "Against King Henry of England," who had attacked and pilloried his teaching.[4] In his tract it is his aim not only to "lay bare the shame of the Roman prostitute before the whole world, to her eternal disgrace," but also, as he says further down, to reveal the "shameless audacity" of the King of England, who is a defender of "the scarlet woman of Rome, the tipsy mother of unchastity"; the King, "that fool," "lies and gibbers like the filthiest of prostitutes," and that, merely to defend the Pope and his Church, "who are after all nothing more than pimp and procuress,

[1] Luther to Staupitz, repeating his words, June 27, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 406.

[2] Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 1, p. 226.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 704 ff.; Erl. ed. 24², p. 166 ff.

[4] "Contra Henricum regem Angliæ," 1522. "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 172 ff. "Opp. Lat. var.," 6, p. 385 *seq.* The German edition published by Luther later ("Werke," Erl. ed., 28, p. 344 ff.) is abbreviated.

and the devil's own dwelling." All this abuse is crammed into a few pages. To conclude, the King, according to Luther's dictum and description, has been fitly consigned to "the dungheap with the Thomists, Papists and other such-like excrements." Side by side with all this we find his grand assurances of his, Luther's, position as the messenger of God. "Christ through me has begun His revelations of the abomination in the Holy Place";[1] "I am convinced that my doctrines have come down to me from Heaven,"[2] etc. The King he politely describes as a crowned donkey, an infamous knave, an impudent royal windbag, the excrement of hogs and asses. The King, according to him, is more foolish than a fool; His Majesty ought to be pelted with mud; he deserves nothing better, this stupid donkey, this Thomistic hog, this lying rascal and carnival clown, who sports the title of king. He is a nit which has not yet turned into a louse, a brat whose father was a bug, a donkey who wants to read the Psalter but is only fit for carrying sacks, a sacrilegious murderer. He is a chosen tool of the devil, a papistical sea-serpent, a blockhead and as bad as the worst rogues whom indeed he outrivals; an abortion of a fool, a limb of Satan whose God is the devil—and so forth.

One of the unfortunate effects of his public struggle on Luther was, that he entangled himself more and more in a kind of polemics in which his invective was only rivalled by his misrepresentation of his opponents' standpoint and arguments.

Preachers of the new faith frequently complained of his insulting and unjust behaviour.

Thus Ambrose Blaurer, the spokesman of the innovation in Würtemberg, laments, in 1523, that Luther's enemies quite rightly made capital out of the hateful language employed in his controversial writings. "They wish to make this honey [Luther's teaching] bitter to us because Luther is so sharp, pugnacious and caustic, . . . because he scolds and rants. . . . Verily this has often displeased me in him, and I should not advise anyone to copy him in this respect. Nevertheless I have not rejected his good, Christian teaching."[3] Matthew Zell, also a Lutheran, wrote in 1523: "Nothing has turned me more against Luther and pleased me less in him, and the same is true of other good

[1] "Contra Henricum," p. 220=445, etc.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 184=391.

[3] "Schutzschrift an den Rath in Costnitz," in L. Hundeshagen, "Beiträge zur Kirchenverfassungsgesch.," 1864, 1, p. 423.

men, than the hard, aggressive and bitter vindications and writings which he has composed against even his own friends, not to speak of the Pope, the bishops and others whom he has attacked so violently and so derisively that hardly has anything sharper, more violent and mocking ever been read."[1]

Carlstadt, Luther's friend, and later theological opponent, underwent such rough treatment at his hands, that a modern Protestant writer on Carlstadt says of the chief work Luther directed against him: Its characteristic feature is the wealth of personal invective. . . . Though attempts have been made to explain the terrible bitterness of his polemics by Luther's disposition and the difficulty of his situation at the time the work was composed, yet the deep impression left by his controversial methods should not be overlooked. From that time forward they were generally imitated by the Lutheran party, even in disputes among themselves, and made to serve in lieu of true discussion; that such a procedure was entirely alien to Christian charity seems not to have been noticed. The author also refers and, with even greater reason, to the attacks against the "Papists," "to the constantly recurring flood of abusive language, insults, misrepresentations and suspicions which the reformer poured upon his foes." He made use of "his extraordinary command of language," to accuse Zwingli, after his death, most maliciously of heresy.[2]

Amongst other opponents of the new faith, Erasmus, in a writing addressed to Luther, says: "Scarcely one of your books have I been able to read to the end, so great and insatiable is the tendency to libel which they display ('*insatiata conviciandi libido*'). If there were only two or three libels one might think you had given vent to them without due consideration, but as it is, your book swarms with abuse on every page ('*scatet undique maledictis*'). You begin with it, go on with it, and end with it."[3] Thomas Murner says, in a reply to Luther, as early as 1520, "I see and understand that you are angry. Therefore it will be best for me to keep cool in order that it may not be said that we both are mad. You really go too far."[4]

It is true that Murner is very severe and satirical towards Luther; in fact, all Luther's opponents who wrote against him frequently made use of stronger expressions than became the cause they advocated, being incited and encouraged in this by the language he employed. The Dominican, Conrad Köllin, in his answer to Luther's attacks on the indissolubility of Christian marriage, is a good instance in point.[5] The Dominicans of

[1] Röhrich, "Gesch. der Reformation im Elsass," 1, 1855, p. 294.

[2] Barge, "Karlstadt," 2, pp. 223, 275, 445.

[3] "Hyperaspistes," 1, "Opp.," ed. Basil., 9, pp. 1066, 1096. Cp. Erasmus in "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 689.

[4] "An den grossmechtigsten . . . Adel tütscher Nation," Strasburg, 1520 (no name), Bl. K. 1.

[5] "Adversus caninas Martini Lutheri nuptias," Coloniæ, 1530. By Luther's "canine marriages," the author does not refer to Luther's

Cologne were particularly irritated by Luther's insults, for at the very outset of the struggle he had called them asses, dogs and hogs.[1]

That Luther's scolding and storming grew worse and worse as the years went on has been pointed out by the Protestant historian Gustav Krüger, who remarks that Melanchthon could never "see eye to eye with him in this"; Luther, however, did not "by any means always reflect upon what he said, and he must not be held responsible for all he flung among the people by word and pen."[2]

Luther's friend, Martin Bucer, strove to console himself in a peculiar fashion for the insults and libels which increased as Luther grew older. To the above-mentioned Ambrose Blaurer he wrote concerning Luther's attacks on the Zwinglians: "These are terrible invectives and even calumnies, but if you take into account Luther's character, the evil is diminished. He is by nature violent and accustomed to vituperation, and the abuse of such men ('*conviciari assuetorum convicia*') is not to be made so much of as that of persons of a more peaceable temper." Two years later, however, Bucer confesses to the same friend his real concern regarding Luther's outbreaks of passion: "It thrills me with a deadly fear ('*tantum non exanimor*') when I think of the fury that boils in the man whenever he is dealing with an opponent. With what utter rage did he not fall on the [Catholic] Duke George."[3]

In recent times Protestants have spoken with a certain admiration of the "heroic, yea, godlike," rage which always inspired Luther's vituperation. One admirer emphasises the fact, that he "was only too often right," because his Popish opponents were altogether hardened, and "therefore it could do their souls no harm to make use of sharp weapons against them"; "it was necessary to warn people against these obdurate enemies and to unveil their wickedness with that entire openness and plainness of speech which alone could impress his contemporaries. He considered this his sacred duty and performed it with diligence." "When he laid about him so mightily, so scornfully, so mercilessly, his efforts were all directed against the devil." "Where it is necessary for the salvation of souls," this theologian urges in excuse, "true charity must not refrain from dealing severe wounds, and Luther was obliged to describe as filth what actually

union with Catherine Bora, as is usually inferred, but, according to the preface, to the numerous marriages rendered possible by Luther's removal of the matrimonial impediments, so that it might happen that one man could marry ten times even in the lifetime of the ten women concerned. Cp. N. Paulus, "Die Dominikaner im Kampfe gegen Luther," p. 126.

[1] N. Paulus, *ibid.* He refers to Luther's "Correspondence," 1, p. 20; 2, p. 362; 6, p. 280.

[2] "Philipp Melanchthon," 1905, p. 16, 4.

[3] "Correspondence of the brothers Ambrose and Thomas Blaurer," ed. Schiess, 1, 1908, pp. 329, 476; Bucer to A. Blaurer, March 5, 1532, and March 3, 1534.

was such." "Thus we see why he not unfrequently chooses dirty, common words and comparisons intentionally in order adequately to express his horror. His eloquence becomes at times a stream carrying with it a quantity of mud, dirt and filth of every kind; but had it not been for it this filth would never have been swept away."[1] All this is expressed, even more briefly and drastically, by the Luther biographer, Adolf Hausrath, where, in reply to Harnack's criticism of the "barbarity of Luther's polemics," he says: "Since Luther's road led him to his goal it must have been the right road, and fault-finders should hold their tongues. . . . He knew the best language to make use of in order to shake his Germans out of their stupid respect for the Roman Antichrist." . . . Luther, the "prophet," treated his foes "exactly as they deserved," save in the case of Zwingli.[2]

This was too much for Gustav Kawerau, another historian of Luther. He pointed out, as against Hausrath, that, not to mention others, Duke George and also Schwenckfeld had experienced such treatment at Luther's hands as was certainly not "deserved." If Hausrath "thanked God" for the barbarity of Luther's prophetical polemics, he, for his part, felt compelled to "protest against the proclamation of any prophetical morality which would oblige us to set aside our own moral standard." "This is to do Luther and his cause, a bad service," says Kawerau. . . . "We are not going to venerate in Luther what was merely earthly."[3] Whether the "earthliness" of his libels and filthy polemics clung only to Luther's feet, or whether it involved his character and whole work, Kawerau does not say.

We may fairly ask whether on the whole the character of the man has been more correctly gauged by those who look upon his favourite kind of controversy as nothing more than the disfiguring dirt under his feet, or by those others who trace it back to the very nature of his titanic struggle with the Church. Bucer, as we just saw, traced Luther's outbursts to the violence of his temper, and Luther himself frequently declares that he wrote "so severely, intentionally and with well-considered courage."[4] This he looks upon as demanded by his position and, therefore, it

[1] Wilhelm Walther, "Für Luther Wider Rom," 1906, p. 232 ff.

[2] "Luthers Leben," 1, 1904, Preface, pp. x., xiii.

[3] "Deutsche Literaturztng.," 1904, col. 1613.

[4] To an anonymous correspondent, August 28, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 149, answering the question, "Why I replied so harshly to the King of Engelland." Principal reason: "My method is not one of compromise, yielding, giving in, or leaving anything undone." "Do not be astonished that so many are scandalised by my writings. This is intended to be so and must be so, that even the few may hold fast to the Gospel." "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 447.

is, as he thinks, "well done."[1] According to Wilhelm Walther, Luther had chosen the "heroic method of development," i.e. "of isolating himself as it were from the whole world"; his standpoint was not "within the grasp" of the world of his opponents.[2] Thus, unless he wished to forsake his cause, he had to carry it through single-handed, straining every nerve and having recourse to vituperation the like of which had never hitherto been heard.

We shall examine elsewhere the psychological questions involved in this sort of polemics (vol. iv., xxvi. 3). The above will suffice concerning the influence exercised on his literary activity by the public position which Luther had assumed.

4. Further Traits towards a Picture of Luther. Outward Appearance. Sufferings, Bodily and Mental

A change had gradually taken place in Luther's outward appearance even previous to his stay at the Wartburg. By the time he had returned to Wittenberg his former leanness had gone and he was inclined to be stout.

Johann Kessler, a Swiss pupil who saw him often in 1522 and who frequently played the lute to cheer him, writes in his "Sabbata": "When I knew Martin at the age of forty-one in 1522 he was by nature somewhat portly, of an upright gait, inclined rather backward than forward, and always carried his face heavenward."[3]

Albert Burer, who was also studying at Wittenberg after Luther's return from the Wartburg, praises his amiability, his pleasant, melodious voice, and his winning manner of speech.[4] Thomas Blaurer, then his enthusiastic disciple, is also full of praise of his kindly, attractive and sym-

[1] Cp. Luther to the Elector Johann, April 16, 1531, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 223 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 388), concerning his two pamphlets, "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," and "Auff das vermeint keiserlich Edict": "I am only sorry that [the style] is not stronger and more violent." The Elector will "readily perceive that my writing is far, far, too dull and soft towards such dry bones and dead branches [as the Papists]." But I was "neither drunk nor asleep when I wrote."

[2] "Für Luther Wider Rom," p. 231.

[3] "Sabbata," St. Gallen, 1902, p. 65.

[4] Letter of Burer, March 27, 1522, in Baum, "Capito und Butzer," 1860, p. 83, and in "Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus," ed. Horawitz and Hartfelder, 1866, p. 303.

pathetic manner towards those who came under his influence and to whom he ever behaved in a simple and natural fashion.[1] Neither of them, however, describes his facial appearance.

From the likenesses of him to be referred to below it appears that his face usually wore an expression of energy and defiance. His chin and mouth protruded slightly and gave an impression of firmness; a slight frown denoted irritability; over his right eye there was a large wart; a lock of curly hair overhung his forehead. His "dark eyes blinked and twinkled like stars so that it was difficult to look at them fixedly."[2] (J. Kessler.) As remarked above, his deportment was upright and almost defiant.

Of what Luther must have been, judging by his descriptions, not one of the portraits which have come down to us gives any good idea.[3] This sounds strange, as the art of portrait painting was already very highly developed in Luther's day, whilst his likenesses were in great demand and were despatched from Wittenberg to every quarter in order to increase his popularity. Dürer and Holbein, who have left us characteristic and faithful likenesses of Melanchthon, never employed their brush or pencil in depicting Luther. The death-mask which we still have was not taken till four days after Luther's death from a stroke, i.e. after decomposition had already made some progress, while the portrait of the dead man painted in haste by Lucas Fortenagel is almost terrifying and betrays a very unpractised hand.[4]

Lucas Cranach the elder, as is well known, sketched or painted several likenesses of Luther, and as the two were very intimate with each other we might have anticipated something reliable. He was, however, not sufficiently true to

[1] Thomas Blaurer, in a letter to his brother Ambrose, dated February 15, 1521, calls Luther "*Pater pientissimus*"; previously, on January 4, he speaks of him as "*christianissimus et sapientissimus vir*," and extols the fact that "*omnia contempsit præter Christum; præter Christum nihil metuit nec sperat et id tamen ita humiliter, ut clare sentias nullos esse hic fucos.*" "Correspondence of the Brothers Blaurer," 1, 1908, pp. 33, 29 f.

[2] Cp. vol. i., p. 279, the "Dicta Melanchthonia" on Luther's eyes. Catholic contemporaries called them diabolical. See *e.g.* Aleander in Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 500.

[3] Cp. for what follows H. Böhmer, "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung," [2], 1910, p. 4 f. Some of the matter contained in the first edition is omitted in the second.

[4] See Denifle-Weiss, 1[2], Pl. IX

life ; he suppressed what he considered to be defects in his sitter, and, in spite of his artistic talent, he did not possess the special qualifications for faithfully reproducing in a portrait the expression of the soul. In his pictures of Luther we are at a loss to find certain traits mentioned in the accounts we possess ; the artist introduces into the face an expression of mildness and tenderness which was foreign to Luther. Neither is it a fact that we have hundreds of pictures from his studio, as is so often stated, for of all the portraits and engravings ascribed to Cranach only five can be considered as absolutely genuine, the copper plates of 1520 and 1521,[1] then the " Squire George " of the Wartburg in the Leipzig Town Library, and two portraits in the Kaufmann Gallery in Berlin. " If we examine the absolutely genuine ' Cranachs ' we at once notice that they have nothing in common with the typical Luther features [of a later day]." From these original likenesses down to the pictures of Luther which circulate to-day there are many steps. The transformation was carried further and further, though the " broad, peasant face " and the " powerful jaw " were destined to remain. Nearly all these pictures represent an elderly man, inclined to corpulence, with somewhat blurred features, with surprisingly abundant curly hair and small, kindly eyes.

This, the typical Luther of to-day, appears perhaps for the first time in the so-called " *Epitaphium Lutheri*," a woodcut which was made after Luther's death by the elder Cranach's son, Lucas Cranach the younger. The type in question became very generally known owing to the picture of Luther painted nine years after his death by the younger Cranach for an altar-piece in the parish church at Weimar, although in this likeness, which has been so frequently copied, there may still be found some traces of the bold, warrior features of the real Luther. Böhmer, the Protestant historian, remarks: " In the most popular of these modern ' ideal pictures,' viz. the oleograph of Luther in the fur cappa which ' adorns ' so many churches, even the Doctor's own Catherine would be unable to recognise her Martin."

The pictured Luther has become almost a fable among Protestants. This may well make us suspicious of the pen-

[1] The latter are shown in Böhmer, p. 2. Cp. *ibid.*, p. 37.

picture of him now spread abroad by so many of his followers and admirers. Is it in the least trustworthy? Here again it is the Protestant authority cited above who complains: "The literary Luther-portraits, though strikingly similar, are all more or less unlike the original. In the strict sense they are not portraits at all, but presentments of a type."

The strain of such strenuous literary work, in the case of one whose public life was so full of commotion as Luther's, could not fail to tax the most healthy nervous system. We can only wonder how he contrived to cope with the excitement and incessant labour of the years from 1520 to 1525 and to continue tirelessly at the task till his life's end.

Amongst his works in those years were various controversial writings printed in 1523, for instance, that against Cochlæus; also tracts such as those "On the Secular Power" and "On the Adoration of the Sacrament"; also the Instructions on the Supper, on Baptism and on the Liturgy, etc., and, besides these, voluminous circular-letters, translations from, and extensive commentaries on, the Bible. There was also a vast multitude of sermons and private letters. Among the writings on widely differing subjects dealt with by Luther in 1524–25 the following may be specified: "On Christian Schools," "Two Unequal Commands of the Emperor," "On Trade and Usury," "On the Abomination of silent Mass," "Against the Heavenly Prophets," "Against the Murderous Peasants," "On the Unfreedom of the Will." His publications in the three years 1523–25 number no less than seventy-nine. His attacks on the vow of chastity, and on celibacy, constitute a striking feature of many of his then writings. Obstinacy in the pursuit of one idea, which characterises the German, degenerates in Luther's case into a sort of monomania, which would have made his writings unreadable, or at least tedious, had not the author's literary gifts and unfortunately the prurient character of the subject-matter appealed to many. The haste in which all this was produced has left its mark everywhere.[1]

[1] None but an expert can have any idea of the "speed with which Luther wrote. He was a born stenographer." It should be noted "that the haste with which he wrote is far less noticeable in the manuscripts which have been preserved than in the writings themselves with their countless defects. Outside a small circle there are but few

In those years Luther's nerves frequently avenged themselves by headaches and attacks of giddiness for the unlimited demands made upon them. Irregular meals and the want of proper attention to the body in the desolate "black monastery" of Wittenberg also contributed their quota. Among the bodily disorders which often troubled him we find him complaining of a disagreeable singing in the ears; then it was that he began to suffer from calculus, a malady which caused him great pains in later years and of which we first hear in 1526. We reserve, however, our treatment of Luther's various ailments till we come to describe the close of his life. (See vol. v., xxxv. 1.)

We cannot, however, avoid dealing here with a matter connected with his pathology, which has frequently been discussed in recent times. The delicate question of his having suffered from syphilis was first broached by the Protestant physician, Friedrich Küchenmeister, in 1881, and another Protestant, the theologian and historian Theodore Kolde, has brought it into more prominent notice by the production of a new document, which in 1904 was unfortunately submitted to noisy discussion by polemical writers and apologists in the public press.

Küchenmeister wrote: "As a student Luther was on the whole healthy. From syphilis, the scourge of the students and knights at that time (we have only to think of Ulrich von Hutten), he never suffered, 'I preserved,' he says, 'my chastity.'"[1]

The inference is, however, not conclusive, since syphilis is now looked upon as an illness which can be contracted not merely by sexual intercourse, but also in other ways. There was therefore no real reason to introduce the question of chastity, which the physician here raises.

As regards, however, the question of infection, every unbiassed historian will make full allowance for the state of that age.

to-day who could fall under the magical influence of Luther's writings, and not weary of listening to the monotonous song of the 'Wittenberg nightingale'" (K. A. Meissinger, in a review of Ficker's edition of the Commentary on Romans, "Frankfurter Ztng.," 1910, No. 300). The expression "Wittenberg nightingale" occurs, as is well known, in a poem by Luther's Nuremberg admirer, Hans Sachs.

[1] "Luthers Krankengesch.," 1881, p. 122. "Commentar ad Gal.," 1531, 1, p. 107. In this passage quoted by Denifle, 1^2, p. 391, Luther speaks of his great zeal in doing penance in the monastery, and adds a little further on (p. 109): "So long as I was a Popish monk, *externe non eram sicut ceteri homines, raptores, iniusti, adulteri, sed servabam castitatem, obedientiam et paupertatem*," which, of course, only means: "I was a good religious."

Owing to the great corruption of morals which prevailed, syphilis, or the "French sickness, *malum Franciæ*," as it was called, raged everywhere, but especially in France and Italy. The danger of infection was, as Luther himself points out, extremely great, so that, as he says, even "boys in the cradle are plagued with this disease." So prevalent was this formerly unknown malady that "friends wished it to each other in jest."[1] He sees in the spread of the "*scabies gallica*" a manifest Divine judgment for the growing lack of the fear of God, and looks upon it as a sign of the approaching end of the world.[2] In his "Chronicle" he says that, in 1490, a new illness, the French sickness, made its appearance, "one of the great signs of the coming of the Last Day."[3]

The new material furnished by Theodore Kolde in his "*Analecta Lutherana*" consists of a medical letter of Wolfgang Rychardus to Johann Magenbuch dated June 11, 1523, taken from the Hamburg Town Library, and is of a character to make one wonder whether Luther did not at one period suffer from syphilis, at any rate in a mild form.[4]

The circumstances of the letter are as follows: Luther was recovering from a serious attack of illness which he himself believed to be due to a bath.[5] We learn from Melanchthon that this indisposition was accompanied by high fever.[6] On May 24, however, the patient was able to report that he was better, but that he "was over-burdened with distracting labours."[7] At that time a certain Apriolus, a renegade Franciscan and zealous disciple of Luther's (his real name was Johann Eberlin), was staying with Luther at Wittenberg. He forwarded detailed accounts of Luther's illness to a physician with whom he was intimate, Wolfgang Rychardus, at Ulm. Rychardus was also a great admirer of the Wittenberg professor and at the same time, as it would appear, a devoted friend of Melanchthon's. In consequence of Apriolus's reports he wrote the medical letter now in

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 38.

[2] In the interpretation of Genesis iii. 17; "Opp. Lat. exeg.," 1, p. 263. Cp. Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 38, 481, where Luther makes use of the usual word "Franzos" for the malady. In the latter passage Luther declares himself ready to exchange his very painful gout for this malady, or even for the plague, were that God's will. Hence he was then, i.e. in his later years, free from it.

[3] German translation of the "Chronicle" in "Werke," ed. Walch, 14; the passage, *ibid.*, p. 1277.

[4] "Analecta Lutherana," p. 50.

[5] To Spalatin, April 25, 1523, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 137.

[6] Melanchthon to Hammelberg, April 29, 1523, "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 615.

[7] To Nic. Hausmann, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 144: "*Corpore satis bene valeo.*"

question to another physician then studying at Wittenberg, Johann Magenbuch of Blaubeuren, who also was intimate with the Wittenberg Reformers, had helped Melanchthon in his Greek lexicon with regard to the medical side, and was then in attendance on Luther. It was Magenbuch who had first brought Rychardus into touch with Luther, and both had already exchanged letters concerning him.[1] Rychardus remained Luther's friend at a later date.[2]

Rychardus wrote to the physician attending Luther, that he had heard of the illness of the new "Elias" (Luther), but now rejoices to learn he is convalescent. It was evident that God was preserving him. In the meantime, out of pity [in a letter not extant], Apriolus had given him various particulars concerning Luther's illness and his sleeplessness. He points out that it was not sufficient that Luther should only enjoy some sleep every second night, though, of course, his mental exertion explained his sleeplessness, hence, as a careful physician, he recommends his friend Magenbuch to give the patient a certain sleeping-draught, which he also describes, and with which Magenbuch ("*qui medicum agis*") must already be acquainted. "But if," he says, "the pains of the French sickness disturb his sleep," these must be alleviated by means of a certain plaster, the mysterious components of which, comprising wine, quicksilver ("*vinum sublimatum*"), and other ingredients he fully describes; this would induce sleep which was absolutely essential for the restoration of health. "For God's sake take good care of Luther," he concludes, and adds greetings to Apriolus his informant.[3]

Divergent interpretations have naturally been placed upon this letter by Luther's friends and enemies. It might have

[1] See Enders in "Luthers Briefwechsel," 4, pp. 87, 88 n.

[2] Luther sent him a copy of his "Chronicle," above mentioned, as a present on May 15, 1544 (Seidemann, "Lutherbriefe," p. 68).

[3] The text in question runs as follows: "*De Helia Luthero vulgata est apud (nos) creberrima fama morbo laborare hominem. Giengerius tamen ex Lipsiis rediens nundinis refert foeliciter, convaluisse scilicet Heliam. qui nos omnes mira affecit lætitia. Clamabant adversarii pseudoregem interiisse de Sickingero gloriantes, pseudopapam autem ægrotum propediem obiturum. Deus tamen, cuius res agitur, melius consuluit. Apriolus tamen multa mihi ex compassione de Lutheri nostri mala valetudine adscripsit, et inter reliqua de nimia vigilia, qua dominus Helias molestetur. Non est mirum, hominem tot cerebri laboribus immersum, in siccitatem cerebri incidere, unde nimia causatur vigilia. Tu autem, qui medicum agis, non debes esse oblitus, si lac mulieris mixtum cum oleo violato in commissuram coronalem ungatur, quam familiariter humectet cerebrum ad somnumque disponat; et si cum hoc dolores* MALI FRANCIE *somno impedimento fuerint, mitigandi sunt cum emplastro, quod fit ex medulla cervi, in qua coquuntur vermes terræ cum modico croco et vino sublimato. Hec si dormituro apponuntur, somnum conciliant, qui somnus maxime est necessarius ad restaurandam sanitatem. Nam quod caret alterna requie durabile non est. Cura nobis Lutherum propter Deum, cuius fidei me commenda et charitati. Melanchthonis* (?) *notum fac Apriolumque saluta.*" (From the "Cod. Rych." in the Wolff collection of the Hamburg Town Library, p. 560.)

sufficed to detail the circumstances and the contents of the letter, did not the somewhat violent objections raised against the view, that, owing to the information given him by Apriolus, Rychardus took Luther to be suffering from the French sickness, render some further remarks necessary.

It has been said that Luther was not ill at all at the time Rychardus wrote, but had recovered his health long before. It is true that in June, 1523, his life was no longer in danger, since Rychardus had heard from Giengerius, who came from the fair at Leipzig, that Elias had recovered ("*convaluisse Heliam*"); but then his friend Apriolus forwarded the above disquieting accounts ("*multa de valetudine adscripsit*") which led Rychardus to write his letter, which in turn is an echo of his informant's letter. The circumstance that Luther was on the whole much better is therefore, as a matter of fact, of no importance. It has also been said that "Rychardus can be understood as speaking in general terms without any reference to Luther." According to this view of the matter the physician's meaning would amount to this: "Luther must be made to sleep by means of the remedy well known to you [and which he describes], but if along with it ('*cum hoc*') the pains of the French sickness should disturb anyone's sleep, they must be allayed by a plaster," etc. It is surely all too evident that such an explanation is untenable.

Again, the word "if" has been emphasised; Rychardus does not say that Luther has syphilis, but that *if* he has it. But, as a matter of fact, he does not write "if he be suffering from it," but, "*if this malady disturbs his sleep*"; taken in connection with the account of the illness, supplied by Apriolus, the most natural (we do not, however, say necessary) interpretation to be placed on his words is that he was aware the patient was suffering from this malady, perhaps only slightly, yet sufficiently to endanger his sleep. "But if, when use is made of the sleeping-draught indicated, syphilis should prevent his sleeping," is surely a proviso which no physician would make in the case of a patient in whom syphilitic symptoms were not actually present; Rychardus would never have spoken of the "new Elias" in this way unless he had reason to believe in the existence of the malady. It would have been far-fetched to introduce the subject of so disgusting a complaint, and much more natural to speak of other commoner causes which might disturb sleep.

It must, however, be allowed, that, both before and after this letter was written, no trace of such an illness occurs in any of the documents concerning Luther. The "*molestiæ*" twice mentioned previously, which by some have been taken to refer to this malady, have, as a matter of fact, an altogether different meaning, which is clear from the context.[1]

[1] In a letter to Staupitz, February 20, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 431, Luther complains of "*molestiæ*," which were not physical sufferings but the weight of his position and undertaking. In the letter to Melanchthon, July 13, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 189, he means by the "other *molestia*" which tormented him, the constipation which

In addition to his bodily ailments, the result more particularly of extreme nervous agitation, the indefatigable worker was over and again tormented with severe attacks of depression and sadness.

They were in part due to the sad experiences with his followers and to the estrangement—now becoming more and more pronounced—of his party from the fanatical Anabaptists; in part also to the alarming reports of the seditious risings of the peasants; also to his deception concerning the Papacy, which, far from falling to pieces "at the breath of the true Gospel," had asserted its authority and even strengthened it by reforms such as those commenced under Hadrian VI. It was, however, principally his "interior struggles," and the pressing reproaches of his conscience concerning his work as a whole, which rendered him a prey to melancholy. This mental agony never ceased; the inward voice he had heard in the Wartburg, and which had pierced his very soul with the keenness of a sword, continued to oppress him: "Are you alone wise? Supposing that all those who follow you are merely dupes."[1]

If he sought for distraction in cheerful conversation, this was merely to react against such gloomy thoughts. The more and more worldly life he began to lead may also be regarded as due in some measure to the effort on his part to escape these moods. We may also find in them the psychological explanation of the excesses he commits in his attacks upon the Church, his very violence serving to relieve his feelings and to reassure him. His customary defiance enables him to surmount all obstacles: the external anxieties caused by his adversaries and the interior temptations which he ascribes to the devil. "I have triumphed over him [the devil]," he exclaims confidently, "who has more power and cunning in his smallest claw than all the popes, kings and doctors. . . . My doctrine shall prevail and the Pope fall, in defiance of the gates of hell and all the powers of the air, the earth and the sea."[2]

"together with temptations of the flesh had prevented him for a whole week from writing, praying, and studying." Cp. "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 171: "*Malum auctum est, quo Vormaciæ laborabam: durissima patior excrementa, ut nunquam in vita, ut remedium desperaverim.*" To Spalatin, June 10, 1521. Cp. above, p. 95.

[1] Above, p. 79 ff. Cp. also volume iii., xviii.

[2] "Contra Henricum," "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 184; "Opp. Lat. var.," 6, p. 391.

We feel it our duty to complete this remarkable picture of passion, defiance and struggle by some few additional traits taken from Luther's writings at that time.

On the question of the vow of chastity and priestly celibacy a rude though perfectly justified answer was supplied him by many writers on the Catholic side, yet he ignored them all, and on the contrary proceeded on his way with even greater fury and passion. He proclaims a sacred command to marry, a command not one whit less binding than the Decalogue. Here, as in the case of other questions of morals and dogma, he is carried forward by passion, rather than by a calm recognition of the truth. He exclaims somewhat later: "Just as it is a matter of stern necessity and strict command when God says: 'Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery,' so there is also stern necessity and strict command, nay a still greater necessity and yet more stringent command: 'Thou shalt marry, Thou shalt have a wife, Thou shalt have a husband.' For there stands God's Word (Gen. i. 27), 'God created man . . . male and female he created them'! The consciences of the unmarried must be importuned, urged and tormented until they comply, and are made at length to say: 'Well, if it must be so, then let it so be.'"[1]

When it was pointed out to him, that in the New Testament celibacy embraced from love of God was presented as one of the evangelical counsels, he straightway denied both the existence and the authority of the evangelical counsels. And when his opponents replied that Christ frequently counselled acts of great virtue without making of them strict commands, but mere counsels of perfection, for instance with the words: "If one smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also," Luther will have it that Christ, even here, gave the strict command to allow ourselves to be smitten also on the left cheek.

In his attack on the Mass, in his excitement, he went so far as to state: No sin of immorality, nay not even "manslaughter, theft, murder and adultery is so harmful as this abomination of the Popish Mass." He adjured the authorities to take steps against the blinded parsons "who run to the altar like hogs to the trough," "the shame of the scarlet woman of Babylon" must be laid bare in order that the "dreadful anger of God may not be poured forth like a glowing furnace upon the negligence" of those who fail to use the "sword entrusted to them by God." These were his words to the people in a sermon of the year 1524.[2]

How deeply his experiences with the fanatics excited and enraged him is apparent, for instance, from this statement concerning Carlstadt: "He is no longer able to go back, there is no

[1] Preface to Justus Menius's book, "Œconomia Christiana," 1529, "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 61; Erl. ed., 63, p. 279 ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 73). The preface is in the shape of a letter to Hans Metzsch, the Captain of the Wittenberg garrison, an unmarried man whom Luther urged in vain to marry.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 773 f.

hope for this orator, inflated and hardened as he is by the applause of the crowd" ("*plausu vulgi inflatus et induratus*").[1] Carlstadt and his followers, according to him, "are always on the look-out for a chance of incriminating the evangel."[2] Luther in these struggles felt bitterly that he himself, the originator of the great movement, had already become to many a byword and a jest, "a target for malice, for deceit, for buffoonery—by reason of my simplicity."[3]

It is true he had a fellow-sufferer at his side, Melanchthon, who at that time "was brought to the brink of the grave"[4] by cares and want of sleep; yet none of his friends suffered as much as he, for the whole burden of care settled upon him. To-day he has to dispute with a "sly and cunning monk," who ill-uses his wife because she desires a separation, and, then, when she actually leaves him, wishes to marry another; Luther flings the desired permission after him ("if others will allow him so to do, I am content").[5] On the morrow he has to go to Wittenberg to take steps "against a new sort of prophets arrived from Antwerp," who deny the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, which, they say, is not founded on the "Word,"[6] On the day following he is assailed with complaints regarding the encroachments of the Lutheran authorities.

"How does Satan rage," he cries in view of the above, "how he rages everywhere against the Word!"[7]

When the news of the fanatics with their revelations concerning the "Word" arrived from Thuringia, and of the iconoclastic tumult at Rothenburg-on-the-Tauber, he again exclaims: "Thomas Münzer at Mühlhausen, not only teacher and preacher, but also king and emperor!" "Thus Satan rages against Christ now that he finds Him to be the stronger."[8]

It was formerly believed, he says at this time, that the world was full of noisy and turbulent ghosts and hobgoblins, and that they were the souls of the dead, a delusion which has been dispelled to-day by the evangel, "for we know now that they are not the souls of men but merely naughty devils." "But now that the devil sees that all his noise and storming is no longer of any avail, he acts in a different manner and begins to rage and storm in his members, i.e. in the godless [and false teachers], hatching in them all sorts of wild and shady beliefs and doctrines."[9]

[1] To Spalatin, March 4, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 133.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, March 23, 1525, *ibid.*, 5, p. 140.
[4] *Ibid.*, March 12, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 138.
[5] *Ibid.*, April 15, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 290, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 157.
[6] *Ibid.*, March 27, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 147.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*, April 3, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 152. To Amsdorf, April 11, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 156.
[9] To the Christians at Antwerp, beginning of April, 1525, "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 547; Erl. ed., 53, p. 342 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 151).

"Yea, verily this rage of Satan everywhere against the Word is not the least significant sign that the end of the world is approaching." At that time, scarcely ten years after the discovery of the evangel, this opinion was already firmly fixed in his mind. "Satan seems to be aware of it, hence his extraordinary outburst of anger."[1] A confirmation of the approach of Judgment Day was discerned by Luther in the circumstance that, as he thought, "the princes were falling" (the French king had been taken captive by Charles V), "that the Emperor would also fall in the end," and that "more of the princes will fall if they permit the people to grow so audacious." "These are greater signs that many believe."[2] The conjunction of the planets is also not to be overlooked, although, he admitted, "I do not understand much about them; the bloody western sun would seem to indicate the king of France, another in the centre, the Emperor; Philip [Melanchthon] is also of this opinion; both together foretell the end of the world."[3]

He declares later that it "may occur any day," and that actual signs of extraordinary magnitude will be seen "in the sun and moon," although we have "already sufficient warning in the sun"; above all, according to him, "the sign among men" [who shall wither away for fear and expectation, Luke xxi. 26] has already been fulfilled: "I am entirely of opinion that we have already experienced it. The evil Pope with his preaching has done very much towards this, namely by greatly affrighting pious minds. . . . The forgiveness of sin through Christ had disappeared." We were "frightened to death at Christ, the Judge." "Owing to the preaching of the evangel I am of opinion that this sign is in great part passed, in the same way that I hold most of the other signs in the heavens to have also already taken place."[4]

His scruples of conscience and the "inward struggles" referred to above Luther accustomed himself more and more to regard as the voices of the Evil One. He fancied it was the Good Spirit who taught him to despise them. It was only the Papists who were deluded and led astray by "Satan." "There," he writes in 1522, viz. among the Papists, "the true masterpiece of Satan is discernible, for he transforms himself into an angel of light. As in the beginning he wished to be equal to the Most High, so now he does not cease to pursue the same aim by deceiving the sons of unbelief with godly words and deeds. Thus does

[1] To Spalatin, March 27, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 147.
[2] *Ibid.*, March 11, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 136.
[3] *Ibid.*, March 27, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 147.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 1^2, p. 19 ff. Sermon of 1533, the second in the "Postils."

he make the Pope his instrument." "To what an abyss," he exclaims, "is he not capable of dragging down the Church by means of his sophists seated in the professorial chairs."[1] When the thought of the day of reckoning or remorse of conscience for their infidelity to the Church awoke either in himself or in his followers, this was to be silenced as the voice of the wicked angel. Uxorious renegades from the religious Orders and the priesthood, who were now assailed by doubts, he consoles by means of his own moral dialectics, telling them they should go "forward with a strong conscience in order to be able to withstand the devil at the hour of death." They were to "arm themselves with the Word of God" against the devil; "you will stand in need of it, but rely upon this, that it is the Word of God, Who cannot lie; read this [my own] little book 'On Vows' carefully and strengthen yourself as best you can," for the "devil will work against you with your vow for all it is worth and make out your marriage and freedom to be sinful."[2] Here he is establishing a new school for the formation of consciences.

How greatly the "inward struggles" pressed upon him in those years, notwithstanding such teachings and his own practice, is plain from two incidents of which we hear by chance.

On one occasion, in a letter written in March, 1525, he invites his old friend, Amsdorf of Magdeburg, to come to Wittenberg that he may assist him "with comfort and friendly offices," because, as he complains, he is "very sad and tempted." The captain of the garrison, Hans von Metzsch, is also, so he reports, in a very troubled state of mind: he too looks for Amsdorf's help, and will put a carriage at the disposal of the Magdeburg guest for the journey here and back.[3] As Luther later, in 1529, urged Metzsch, who till then had remained a bachelor, to marry forthwith and so save himself mental trouble,[4] it has been assumed by Protestants that Metzsch was tormented by temptations concerning marriage as early as 1525, and that, as Luther in his letter to Amsdorf places himself in the same category with him,[5] "it was plain of what nature Luther's temptations were." It is certainly

[1] "Contra Henricum regem," "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 205 f.; "Opp. Lat. var.," 6, p. 424.

[2] "On the two kinds of the Sacrament," 1522, "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 35; Erl. ed., 28, p. 311.

[3] On March 12, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 138.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 277 ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 73). See above, p. 166, n. 1.

[5] "*Nos afflicti satis et tentati sumus.*"

possible that Luther meant by what he styles his "temptations,"[1] the struggles he had to sustain on account of the question of his marriage, which was pressing upon him more and more heavily. He elsewhere admits his fear lest he should lower himself and his cause in the eyes of many by his marriage, while on the other hand he feels himself impelled to matrimony by the impulse of nature. It was not merely concern for the good name of the evangel ("We are a spectacle to the world," etc.)[2] which troubled him. There is no doubt that these "temptations," if they really referred to matrimony, consisted in scruples of conscience which he had not yet mastered. We can readily understand that it was only gradually, and by means of strong representations from within and from his friends, that he was at length able to overcome the hesitation which had persisted from his Catholic days when his opinions had been so different.

Another instance of the effect of his temptations on his temperament is related in the Notes of his physician Ratzeberger.[3] The details refer to 1525 or 1524.[4] Ratzeberger says that Luther "had privatim to endure great attacks of Sathana," and had "frequently been disturbed by the demon in various ways when studying and writing in his little writing-room." On one occasion Master Lucas Edemberger, George Rhau and some other good comrades, who were musicians, came to visit Luther, but on enquiry at his house, learnt that he had "for some time past" shut himself up and refused to see anyone, or to taste food or drink. Edemberger received no answer to his knock, and, looking through the keyhole, saw Luther lying on his face on the floor with outstretched arms in a faint. He forced open the door, raised him and brought him to a lower chamber where some food was given him. "Thereupon he and his comrades began to play: at this Dr. Luther came to himself slowly, and his melancholy and sadness vanished" Becoming cheerful he begged his visitors to visit him often and cheer him with their music, "for he found, that as soon as he heard music his temptations and melancholy disappeared: hence the devil was a great enemy of music, which cheers a man, for he loves nothing better than to reduce him to gloom and sadness and make him faint-hearted and full of doubts."

We have here a remarkable example of how his temptations affected Luther bodily and were in turn influenced by his bodily state, a subject which we shall reserve for future consideration (vol. vi., xxxvi. 1, 2). This mutual influence finds its expression in the relief afforded him by music.

Ratzeberger adds other interesting particulars, showing

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, pp. 796, n. 2, 729.
[2] See above, p. 133.
[3] "Handschriftl. Gesch.," ed. Neudecker, p. 58.
[4] G. Kawerau, "Etwas vom kranken Luther" (Deutsch-evangelische Blätter," 29, 1904, p. 303 ff.), p. 305.

the happy effect of music on Luther's mind when confused by anxieties and inward torments.

"As he found great relief from music in his temptations, sadness and fits of melancholy, he wrote to Ludwig Senftlin [Senfl], the Ducal Bavarian Band-master, and begged him to set to music the text '*In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam*,' which he did"; it was also Luther's custom to have some music after supper with his guests, "especially devotional music, taken from the Gregorian chants."[1]

It is a relief to dwell for a moment, at the conclusion of a rather disagreeable chapter, on the pleasing trait of Luther's fondness for the melodies of the Church which he had known and loved from his youth, and for music generally. Formerly, the notes of the Church's chants had summoned him to "raise a clean heart to God," and now music assists him to assuage to some extent the storms which rage in his breast.

His letter to the highly esteemed composer Senfl, who was in the service of the Duke of Bavaria, is still extant.[2] It is dated October 4, 1530, and in it Luther asks for a copy of a motet on the text "*In pace*," etc., arranged for several voices, should Senfl have such a thing, for since his boyish days the (Gregorian) melody to this text had pleased him, and did so still more when he learnt to understand the meaning of the words of the text. If Senfl had no such composition in his possession then he would beg him to compose one later, perhaps after Luther's death, for he now hoped that death would soon free him from a world of which he was as weary as it was of him, one reason why that Antiphon of the entrance into rest was so dear to him. It is the first Antiphon in the Nocturns of the Holy Saturday Office and runs: "In peace in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest, for Thou, O Lord, hast singularly settled me in hope."[3]

"We know," he continues, "that music is hateful and unbearable to the devils, and I am not ashamed to declare, that next to theology only music is able to afford interior peace and joy. The devil likes to cause us trouble and perplexity, but he takes to flight at the sound of music, just as he does at the words of theology, and for this reason the prophets always combined theology and music, the teaching of truth and the chanting of psalms and hymns." "It was thus that David with his harp," he said on another occasion, "allayed Saul's temptations when the devil plagued him. . . . Do not dispute with the devil about the law, for he is a rare conjurer."[4] "He has a bulwark against us in our flesh and blood; . . . when he makes me fancy that God is far from me, I say: Well then, I will cry and call upon

[1] "Handschriftl. Gesch.," p. 59.

[2] "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 276. Letters edited by De Wette, 4 (not 3, as stated by the editor of Ratzeberger), p. 181.

[3] From Psalm iv. 9 ff.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 60 ("Tischreden").

Him."[1] "Many temptations and evil thoughts are dispelled by music."[2] "Singers are cheerful and drive away cares with song."[3]

Senfl's sweet and charming motets had, he assures him, special power over him.[4] "But I allow myself to be carried away almost too much by my love for this art," he says at the end of his letter to Senfl, "which has often refreshed me and delivered me from great molestations."

It would doubtless have been of great advantage to Luther's cause had his insistent praise of the person he is addressing, and of the Dukes of Bavaria for their love of music, succeeded in securing for him a footing in Munich. He does not in this letter conceal the fact that these Dukes were not favourably disposed towards him. Senfl, though holding constant intercourse with the followers of the new teaching, remained a member of the Catholic Church, nor were the Dukes of Bavaria, for all their enlightened ideas, to be tricked into a compromise with heresy by any attempt, however clever and pious in appearance. The warm expression of trust and confidence in God, such as we find here, was not unusual in the letters Luther addressed to princely Courts and high officers of state.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 61.
[2] *Ibid.*, 61, p. 307.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[4] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER XIV

FROM THE PEASANT WAR TO THE DIET OF AUGSBURG (1525–1530)

1. Luther's Marriage

WHEN, in November, 1524, Spalatin, on the occasion of an enquiry made by a lady, ventured to broach the question when Luther proposed taking a wife, he received the following answer: He was to tell the enquirer (Argula), that Luther was "in the hands of God, as a creature whose heart He could fashion as He would; whom He was able to kill or to make alive at any hour and any moment." His feelings were yet foreign to matrimony. "But I shall neither set bounds to God's action in my regard, nor listen to my own heart."[1] By these words, which were addressed to all observers and critics, he not only left himself an open door, but attempted to describe his state in the terms of that pseudo-mysticism of man's bondage and lack of free will as regards God's designs to which at times he was wont to abandon himself more or less completely, according to the varying circumstances of his life.

About March or April, 1525, a definite intention to marry begins to appear. The letter to Spalatin referred to above, on p. 140, was written on April 16, and, though in it he does not yet admit his determination to marry, he speaks of himself jestingly as a famous lover, who had had at one time three wives in his hands. His eye fell on Catherine von Bora, who after her flight from the convent at Nimbschen, had found a home in the house of the Town-clerk, Reichenbach (above, p. 138). He speaks of her in a letter of May 4 as "my Katey" and declares that he is about to marry

[1] On November 30, 1524, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 77 (see p. 181, n. 2). Here Luther remarks that there is much gossip ("*garriri*") about him and his marriage.

her.[1] Owing to his intimacy with her all sorts of stories went the rounds in the town during the following months, to which intercourse with the ex-nuns referred to above (p. 145) gave all the more colour.

Then, suddenly, without consulting any of his friends and with a haste which surprised even his own followers, on the evening of June 13, he celebrated his wedding with Bora in his own house, with all the formalities then usual. Besides Bugenhagen and Jonas, Luther's friends, only the painter Lucas Cranach and his wife, and the Professor of Jurisprudence, Dr. Apel, were summoned as witnesses. The consummation of the marriage seems to have been duly witnessed by Bugenhagen as Pastor of Wittenberg. The public wedding did not take place until June 27, according to the custom common in that district of dividing the actual marriage from the public ceremony. During the interval Luther invited several guests to be present, as we see from his letters, which are still extant. From June 13 he speaks of himself already as "*copulatus*,"[2] and as a "husband."[3]

On June 14 Jonas sent by special messenger to Spalatin a letter, evidently written under the stress of very mixed feelings: "Luther has taken Catherine von Bora to wife. Yesterday I was there and saw the betrothed on the bridal couch. I could not restrain my tears at the sight; I know not what strong emotion stirred my soul; now that it has taken place and is the Will of God, I wish the excellent, honest man and our beloved father in the Lord, every happiness. God is wonderful in His decrees!"[4]

Luther also was at pains to represent the incident as divinely ordained, a high and holy act.

At a later date he said: "God willed that I should take pity on her [Catherine]."[5] Even before taking the step, he had thought out the plan of impressing upon his union

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 293 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 164). In October, 1524, he speaks of Pastor Caspar Glatz as her future husband, without mentioning his own intentions ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 35).

[2] To Amsdorf, June 21, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 204. Cp. Enders in "Luthers Briefwechsel," 5, p. 195.

[3] To the Marshal Johann von Dolzigk, June 21, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 322 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 201). Cp. p. 175, n. 5, "*coniux*."

[4] Jonas to Spalatin, June 14, 1525, in "Jonas' Briefwechsel," ed. Kawerau, 1, 1884, p. 94.

[5] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 238, "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 184.

with "Katey," the ex-nun, the character of a "reforming work." "Because our enemies do not cease to condemn matrimony," he writes, and "our 'little wiseacres' daily scoff at it," he feels himself for that very reason attracted to it; being determined to give celebrity to the true teaching of the Gospel concerning marriage.[1] He had informed Albert, the archiepiscopal Elector, that before quitting this life he would enter the married state, which he considered as enjoined by God,[2] and somewhat earlier he had confided to a friend that, if he could manage it before he died, he meant "to take his Katey to wife in order to spite the devil."[3] This agrees in part with what he wrote shortly after his marriage: "The Lord plunged me suddenly, while I still clung to quite other views, into matrimony."[4]

As a matter of fact it was the unpleasant rumours aroused when his intimacy with Bora became known, which hastened the step. This is what Bugenhagen, an authentic witness, says with evident displeasure: Evil tales were the cause of Dr. Martin's becoming a married man so unexpectedly.[5] Luther himself admits this in a confidential letter to Spalatin three days after the step. He informs him of his marriage as follows: "I have shut the mouth of those who slandered me and Catherine von Bora."[6]

In the same letter Luther also refers to the reproach he had at first dreaded, viz. of degrading himself by his marriage. He scoffs at this: "I have become so low and despicable by this marriage," he says jokingly, "that I hope the angels will laugh and all the devils weep. The world and its 'wise ones' do not yet recognise the pious and holy work of God and in me they regard it as something impious and devilish. Hence it pleases me greatly that, by my marriage,

[1] To Spalatin, April 10, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 153.

[2] See above, p. 142.

[3] To Johann Rühel, May 4, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., p. 53, 294 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 164).

[4] To Wenceslaus Link, June 20, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 201: "*Dominus me subito aliaque cogitantem coniecit mire in coniugium.*"

[5] Vogt, "Briefwechsel Bugenhagens," 1888, p. 32: "*Maligna fama effecit, ut doctor Martinus insperato ficret coniux; post aliquot tamen dies publica solemnitate duximus istas sacras nuptias etiam coram mundo venerandas.*"

[6] On June 16, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 197: "*Os obstruxi infamantibus me cum Catharina Bora.*" At a much later date he excuses the haste by his wish to anticipate the proposal of his friends that he should select some other woman.

the opinion of those who continue to persevere in their ignorance of divine things is brought in question and condemned. Farewell, and pray for me."[1] Such utterances were directed also against many of the friends of the Evangel. Hieronymus Schurf, the lawyer, and otherwise Luther's confidant, had been one of those opposed to his marriage. He had said: "If this Monk takes a wife all the world and the devil himself will laugh, and Luther will undo the whole of his previous work."[2]

Melanchthon, too, expressed his deep displeasure at the marriage in the remarkable Greek letter already once referred to (p. 145) addressed to his friend Joachim Camerarius, and dated June 16, 1525.

The true wording of this Greek letter, which Camerarius saw fit to modify, as is proved by the original in the Chigi Library in Rome, with his "corrections" in red pencil, only became known in 1876.[3] He revised it completely for his edition of Melanchthon's letters because he feared to

[1] "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 197, 198.

[2] See Amsdorf in Scultetus (†1625), "Annales Evangelii," 1, p. 274.

[3] V. Druffel, "Die Melanchthon-Handschriften der Chigi-Bibliothek," in "SB. der Bayr. Akad. phil.-hist. Kl.," 1876, p. 491 ff. W. Meyer, "Uber die Originale von Melanchthons Briefen an Camerarius," *ibid.*, p. 596 ff. "Katholik," 1900, 1, p. 392, an article by P. A. Kirsch with photo of letter. We are forced to depart from his translation on certain points. Cp. also Nik. Müller's reprint in "Zeitschr. für Kirchengesch.," 21, 1901, p. 595. The letter runs:

"Εὖ πράττειν. Ὅτι μὲν ἔμελλε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἡ φήμη οὐχ ὅμοια περὶ τοῦ γάμου τοῦ Λουθέρου ἀγγεῖλαι, ἔδοξέ μοι περὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς γνώμην ἔχω σοι ἐπιστέλλειν. μηνὸς Ἰουνίου ἡμέρᾳ ιγ' ἀπροσδοκήτως ἔγημε τὴν Βορείαν ὁ Λούθερος μηδενὶ τῶν φίλων τὸ πρᾶγμα πρὸ τοῦ ἀναθέμενος, ἀλλ' ἑσπέρας πρὸς δεῖπνον καλέσας τὸν Πομερανιέα καὶ Λούκαν τὸν γραφέα καὶ τὸν Ἄπελλον μόνους ἐποίησε τὰ εἰθισμένα προτέλεια.

"Θαυμάσειας δὲ ἄν, τούτῳ τῷ δυστυχεῖ χρόνῳ, καλῶν κἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν πάντοτε ταλαιπωρουμένων τοῦτον οὐ συμπάσχειν, ἀλλ' ὡς δοκεῖ μᾶλλον τρυφᾶν καὶ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἀξίωμα ἐλαττοῦν, ὅτε μάλιστα χρείαν ἔχει ἡ Γερμανία φρονήματός τε καὶ ἐξουσίας αὐτοῦ. Ἐγὰ δὲ ταῦτα οὕτω πως γενέσθαι οἶμαι. Ἐστὶν ὁ ἀνὴρ ὡς μάλιστα εὐχερὴς καὶ αἱ μοναχαὶ πάσῃ μηχανῇ ἐπιβουλευομέναι προσέσπασαν αὐτόν. Ἴσως ἡ πολλὴ συνήθεια, ἡ σὺν ταῖς μοναχαῖς κἂν γενναῖον ὄντα καὶ μεγαλόψυχον κατεμάλθαξε ἥ καὶ προσεξέκαυσε. τοῦτον τρόπον εἰσπεσεῖν δοκεῖ εἰς ταύτην τὴν ἄκαιρον βίου μεταβολήν. Θρυλλούμενον δὲ, ὅτι καὶ πρὸ τοῦ διακόρευσεν αὐτὴν, ἐψεῦσθαι δῆλόν ἐστι.

"Νυνὶ δὲ τὸ πραχθὲν μὴ βαρέως φέρειν δεῖ ἢ ὀνειδίζειν. ἀλλὰ ἡγοῦμαι ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκασθῆναι γαμεῖν. Οὗτος δὲ βίος ταπεινὸς μέν, ἀλλὰ ὅσιός ἐστι καὶ θεῷ μᾶλλον τοῦ ἀγάμου ἀρέσκει. Καὶ ὅτι αὐτὸν τὸν Λούθερον ἐπίλυπόν πως ὄντα ὁρῶ καὶ ταραχθέντα διὰ τὴν βιου μεταβολήν, πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ ἐννοίᾳ ἐπιχειρῶ παραμυθεῖσθαι, ἐπειδὴ οὕπω ἔπραξέ τι, ὅπερ ἐγκαλεῖσθαι ἀξιῶ ἢ ἀναπολόγητον δοκεῖ. ἔτι δὲ τεκμήριά τινα ἔχω τῆς εὐσεβείας αὐτοῦ, ὥστε κατακρίνειν οὐκ ἐξεῖναι. ἔπειτα ἂν μᾶλλον ἡυχόμην αὐτὸν ταπεινοῦσθαι ἢ ὑψοῦσθαι καὶ ἐπαίρεσθαι, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐπισφαλές, οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἐν ἱερωσύνῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις. τὸ γὰρ εὖ

make the severe censure it contained public; thus the letter was formerly only known in the altered shape in which it was also published in 1834 in the "*Corpus Reformatorum*," which begins with Melanchthon's letters. A similar fate has befallen several other letters of Melanchthon in the Camerarius editions, and consequently also in the "*Corpus*."

Melanchthon, according to the real text of the letter (which we give in full in the note), commences with these words: "Since you have probably received divergent accounts concerning Luther's marriage, I judge it well to send you my views on his wedding." After detailing the external circumstances already referred to, and pointing out that Luther "had not consulted any of his friends beforehand," he continues: "You will perhaps be surprised that, at this unhappy time when upright and right-thinking men are everywhere being oppressed, he is not also suffering, but, to all appearance, leads a more easy life (*μᾶλλον τρυφᾶν*) and endangers his reputation, notwithstanding the fact that the German nation stands in need of all his wisdom and strength. It appears to me, however, that this is how it has happened." And here Melanchthon brings forward the complaints already related (p. 145) of the imprudent intimacy between a "man otherwise noble and high-minded" and the escaped nuns, who had made use of every art to attract him and thus had rendered him effeminate and inflamed his passions. "He seems after this fashion to have been drawn into the untimely change in his mode of life. It is clear, however, that the gossip concerning his previous criminal intercourse with her [Bora] was false. Now the thing is done it is useless to find fault with it, or to take it amiss, for I believe that nature impels man to matrimony. Even though this life is low, yet it is holy, and more pleasing to God than the unmarried state. And since

πράττειν, ἀφορμὴ τοῦ κακῶς φρονεῖν γίνεται, οὐ μόνον, ὡς ὁ ῥήτωρ ἔφη, τοῖς ἀνοήτοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σοφοῖς.

"*Πρὸς τούτῳ καὶ ἐλπίζω, ὅτι ὁ βίος οὑτοσὶ σεμνότερον αὐτὸν ποιήσει, ὥστε καί ἀποβαλεῖν τὴν βωμολοχίαν, ἧς πολλάκις ἐμεμψάμεθα. ἄλλος γὰρ βίος ἄλλην δίαιταν κατὰ παροιμίαν καταστήσει.*

"*Ταῦτα πρός σε μακρολογῶ, ὥστε μή σε ὑπὸ παραδόξου πράγματος ἄγαν ταράττεσθαι. οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι μέλει σοι τοῦ ἀξιώματος τοῦ Λουθέρου, ὅπερ νυνὶ ἐλαττοῦσθαι ἀχθεσθήσῃ. Παρακαλῶ δέ σε πράως ταῦτα φέρειν, ὅτι τίμιος βίος ὁ γάμος ἐν ἁγίαις γραφαῖς εἶναι λέγεται. εἰκὸς δὲ ἀναγκασθῆναι ἀληθῶς γαμεῖν. Πολλὰ τῶν πάλαι ἁγίων πταίσματα ἔδειξεν ὁ θεὸς ἡμῖν, ὅτι θέλει ἡμᾶς βασανίζοντας τὸν αὐτοῦ λόγον, οὐκ ἀξίωμα ἀνθρώπων ἢ πρόσωπον σύμβουλον ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ μόνον αὐτοῦ λόγον. πάλιν δὲ ἀσεβέστατός ἐστιν, ὅστις διὰ τὸ διδασκάλου πταῖσμα καταγιγνώσκει τῆς διδαχῆς.*

"Michaelis pergrata consuetudo in his turbis mihi est, quem miror, qui passus sis isthinc discedere. Patrem officiosissime tractato, et puta te hanc illi pro paterno amore gratiam debere *καὶ ἀντιπελαργεῖν*. De Francicis rebus a te litteras expecto. Vale foeliciter. Postridie corp. Christi. Tabellarius qui has reddet, recta ad nos rediturus est. *Φίλιππος*." (The seal is still preserved.)

I see that Luther is to some extent sad and troubled about this change in his way of life, I seek very earnestly to encourage him by representing to him that he has done nothing which, in my opinion, can be made a subject of reproach to him."

In spite of his misgivings Melanchthon seeks to console himself with two strange reflections: Advancement and honour are dangerous to all men, even to those who fear God as Luther does, and therefore this "low" way of life is good for him. And again, "I am in hopes that he will now lay aside the buffoonery [1] for which we have so often found fault with him." Camerarius must not allow himself to be disconcerted by Luther's unexpected mode of proceeding, even though he may be painfully aware that it is injurious to him. "I exhort you to bear this with patience . . . God has shown us by the numerous mistakes (*πταίσματα*) the Saints committed in earlier ages, that He wishes us to prove His Word and not to rely upon the reputation of any man, but only on His Word. He would, indeed, be a very godless man who, on account of the mistake (*πταῖσμα*) of the doctor, should judge slightingly of his doctrine. . . ." Melanchthon then reiterates his statement that nature impels a man to matrimony, adding to it the word "verily."[2]

The letter, which was not intended for publication and, probably for this reason, was written in Greek, contains a strange admixture of blame and dissatisfaction coupled with recognition and praise of Luther's good qualities. We see clearly how Melanchthon tries to overcome the bitterness he feels by means of these reflections, which however reveal him as the learned and timid Humanist he really was, rather than as a theologian and man of the world. Protestants have attempted to moderate the impression created by this letter of Melanchthon's by repre-

[1] Not *βδελυρίαν*, debauchery, as was thought, but *βωμολοχίαν*, is the correct reading. The latter might perhaps be translated as "the passion for making coarse jests." This is the opinion of G. Kawerau in "Deutsch-Evangelische Blätter," 1906, "Luther und Melanchthon" (in the reprint, p. 37), who remarks that the only thing damning for Luther in this letter was Melanchthon's statement "concerning the coarse jests to which Luther was given in his bachelor days, and which had so often scandalised his friend." Kawerau, for this very reason, thinks that this much-discussed letter, "which Camerarius only ventured to print after much revision" (p. 34), is much better calculated to "make us acquainted with Melanchthon than with Luther, and simply bears witness to the former's sensitiveness" (p. 37). It is true that "some of Luther's talk appears to us to-day frightfully coarse, and Melanchthon felt as we do on the subject"; but apart from the fact that Melanchthon's views were not representative of his age, Mathesius declares that "he never heard an immodest word from Luther's lips." We shall return later to the question of that age as a linguistic standard of morality and to Mathesius's statement, which, we may remark, refers to a later period.

[2] *εἰκὸς δὲ ἀναγκασθῆναι ἀληθῶς γαμεῖν*. The subject of the verb *ἀναγκασθῆναι* is the infinitive *γαμεῖν*, as in the previous passage *ἡγοῦμαι ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκασθῆναι γαμεῖν*. On the passive form *ἀναγκασθῆναι*, see e.g. Plato, "Phæd.," 242a, 254a.

senting it as written hastily in a passing fit of temper. As a matter of fact, however, it does not bear the impress of having been so written, and, considering how the writer is evidently at pains to find some justification for Luther's conduct, it cannot be described as written hastily and without due thought. The writer, in spite of all he says, is anxious that "what has taken place should not be blamed"; Luther to him is still "a noble and high-minded man," one, too, who has given proof of his fear of God.

One of the most recent of Luther admirers accordingly abandons this excuse, and merely speaks of the letter as a "hateful" one, "written in an extremely uncomfortable frame of mind." After various reflections thereon he arrives at the following surprising conclusion: "If we place ourselves in poor Melanchthon's position and realise the slight offered him in not having been apprised of the matter until after the wedding had taken place, and his grief that his friend should thus expose the cause of the evangel to slander, we must admit that, after all, the letter was quite amiable." If, however, there was any question of slight in the matter, Melanchthon was certainly not the only one who had cause for complaint; accustomed as he was to such treatment on Luther's part, he scarcely even refers to it, his objection being based on far more serious grounds. He showed no sign of having been slighted when, shortly after, he invited Wenceslaus Link to the public "*nuptiæ*," expressing his good wishes that Luther's marriage "may turn out well."[1] The scruples which he shared with Camerarius concerning Luther's intimacy with the ex-nuns were not new, but had long disquieted him. We may notice over and over again his secret esteem for celibacy, which he ranks above matrimony, and such thoughts may well have animated him when composing the letter, even though he repels them and praises the married state. "It is plain," says Kawerau, "that a shudder passes through his frame at the very thought of marriage between a monk and a nun."[2] We can only regard it as due to his state of indecision when he says in the letter in question, first that Luther "had done nothing that called for reproach," and then, that "he had made a mistake."

We may nevertheless grant to the Protestant author, mentioned at the commencement of the previous paragraph, that Melanchthon—who was not, as a matter of fact, apprised by Luther of his thoughts at that time—"did not rightly understand the motive which caused him to enter the married state at such a moment. Indeed, the motive was not to be readily understood. Luther's intention, so our author thinks, was to set his enemies at defiance by his marriage and to show them "that he would pay less attention to them than ever"; being apprehensive of his approaching end, he determined to set the last touch to his doctrine on matrimony by a solemn and manly act.

Many others, like Melanchthon, have been unable to appreciate

[1] "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 750. [2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 36.

this "great motive," or at any rate the disadvantages of marriage in Luther's case seem to have weighed more heavily with them than its compensating advantages in the service of the Reformation.

This explanation, nevertheless, appears so convincing to our author that he does not insist further upon another reason which he hints at, viz. that Catherine von Bora "was unkindly disposed to Melanchthon," and that he much feared she would alienate his friend's heart from him. The same writer mildly remarks concerning the falsification of the letter committed by Camerarius: "it was not with the intention of falsifying, that he made various alterations, but in order to prevent disedification." Camerarius has, however, unfortunately aggravated one passage in the letter, for where Melanchthon speaks for the first time of man's natural inclination for marriage, Camerarius adds the word *αὐτόν*, thus referring directly to Luther what the writer intended for men in general: "I believe *he* was forced by nature to marry," which, following immediately upon the passage referring to his frivolous intercourse with the nuns and the calumnies about Bora, gives a still more unfavourable impression of Luther. This at any rate may serve to exculpate the Catholic controversialists, who erroneously referred this passage, and the other one which resembles it, directly to Luther, whereas he is comprised in it only indirectly.

According to what we have seen, the circumstance of Luther's sudden marriage occurring just at the time of the panic of the Peasant War, made an especially deep impression on Melanchthon, who was ever inclined to circumspection and prudence.

In point of fact, a more unsuitable time, and one in more glaring contrast with nuptial festivities, it would have been impossible for Luther to select. The flames of the conflagration raging throughout Germany and even in the vicinity of Wittenberg, and the battlefields strewn with the dead, slain by the rebels or the supporters of the Knights and Princes, formed a terrible background to the Wittenberg wedding.

The precipitancy of his action was the more remarkable because at that time Luther himself was living in a state of keen anxiety concerning the outcome of the great social and religious upheaval.

Seeing that he was looked upon, by both lord and peasant, as the prime instigator of the trouble, he had grave cause to fear for his own safety. About five weeks later, writing from Seeburg, near Mansfeld, after a preaching tour through the rebels' country, he says: "I, who am also affected by

it, for the devil is intent upon my death, know that he is angered because so far he has been unable either by cunning or by force to harm me and is determined to be rid of me even should he be forced to do his worst and set the whole world in an uproar; so that I really believe, and it appears to me, that it is on my account that he does such things in the world in order that God may plague the world. If I reach home safe and sound, I shall, with God's help, prepare myself for death."[1]

Whereas he had written not long before, that he was not thinking of marrying because he awaited death, i.e. the death-penalty for heresy,[2] according to his statements after his marriage it was the thought of death which had led him to contract the union; God's work was unmistakable, God was shaming his adversaries. He repeatedly makes statements to this effect, which we shall gather together with some of his other assertions to form a picture of his mental state then.

In one of the letters of invitation to the public wedding he writes: "The lords, priests and peasants are all against me and threaten me with death; well, as they are so mad and foolish I shall take care to be found at my end in the state [matrimony] ordained by God."[3] He is forced, however, to brace himself up in order not to lose heart and be vexed at the falling away of the people from him; "to resign favour, honour and followers"[4] caused him grief of heart and an inward struggle.

His conviction that the end of the world was approaching, also did its part in exciting him; "the destruction of the world may be expected any hour," he writes.[5]

Hence he is determined, as he declares, to marry "in order to

[1] To Johann Rühel, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 293 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 164).

[2] To Spalatin, November 30, 1524 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 77): "*Animus alienus est a coniugio, cum expectem quotidie mortem et meritum hæretici supplicium.*" This he wrote under the influence of the stringent decrees of the Diet of Nuremberg (April 18, 1524), and in order to work upon his Elector. The decrees had led him to write: "You are in a great hurry to put me, a poor man, to death," but that his death would be the undoing of his enemies. "Two unequal decrees of the Emperor," "Werke," Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 222 f.; Weim. ed., 15, p. 254.

[3] To Johann Rühel, Johann Thür and Caspar Müller, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 314 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 195).

[4] Sermon on Psalm xxvi. preached in Wittenberg shortly after his marriage, "Werke," Erl. ed., 39, p. 115.

[5] From the concluding words of the tract of 1525: "Against the murderous, thievish bands of peasants," "Werke," Erl. ed., 18, p. 361; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 309.

defy the devil,"[1] i.e. he defies all his afflictions and anxieties, all the accusations of others as well as of his own conscience, and surrenders himself to the feeling, which, since the Wartburg days, ever stirred the depths of his soul on such occasions and made him hope to recover all the ground lost by means of force and violence. Peace and contentment of soul were not, however, the immediate result, for Melanchthon writes, that, after his marriage, Luther had been "sad and troubled."[2]

Luther will, however, have it that it was God Who had shown him the road he had taken.

"God is pleased to work wonders in order to mock me and the world and to make fools of us."[3] "That it is God's work even the 'wise ones' among us are forced to acknowledge, though they are greatly vexed. The picture their fancy paints of me and the girl makes them lose their wits so that they think and speak godlessly. But the Lord liveth and is greater in us than he [the devil] that is in the world (1 John iv. 4)."[4] "God willed it and carried it out" ("*Sic Deus voluit et fecit*").[5] "On account of this work of God I have, it is true, to suffer much abuse and many calumnies."[6] "Thus, so far as I am able, I have [by my marriage] thrown away the last remnant of my former popish life; I am determined to make them [my foes] still madder and more foolish; this is the stirrup-cup and my last good-bye."[7]

"Were the world not scandalised at us, I should be scandalised at the world, for I should be afraid lest what we undertake is not of God; but as the world is scandalised and withstands me, I am edified and comfort myself in God; do you likewise."[8]

"The cause of the Evangel has been greatly wronged by Münzer and the peasants," he declares, therefore he wished to strengthen it by his marriage, in spite of the Papists who were shouting in triumph ("*ne videar cessisse*"), "and I shall do more still which will grieve them and bring them to the recognition of the Word."[9]

If, to the motives for his marriage which he enumerates above, we add a further reason, also alleged by him, viz. that he wished to show himself obedient to his father, who desired the marriage, we arrive at the stately number of seven reasons. They may be arranged as follows: 1. Because it was necessary to shut the mouth of those who spoke evil of him on account of his relations with Bora. 2. Because he was obliged to take pity on the forsaken nun. 3. Be-

[1] See above, p. 175. [2] See above, p. 178.
[3] To Leonard Koppe, June 17, 1525 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 199).
[4] To Michael Stiefel, June 17, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 199.
[5] To Amsdorf, June 21, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 204.
[6] To Wenceslaus Link, June 20, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 201.
[7] In letter quoted above, p. 181, n. 3.
[8] To Michael Stiefel, September 29, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 248.
[9] To Johann Brismann (after August 15 ?), 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 226.

cause his father wished it. 4. Because the Catholics represented matrimony as contrary to the Gospel. 5. Because even his friends laughed at his plan of marrying. 6. Because the peasants and the priests threatened him with death and he must therefore defy the terrors raised by the devil. 7. Because God's will was plainly apparent in the circumstances. Melanchthon's reason, viz. that man is impelled to marriage by nature, Luther does not himself bring forward.

We must not lose sight of the circumstance that the marriage took place barely five weeks after the death of the Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise. His successor was more openly favourable towards the ecclesiastical innovations. Frederick would have nothing to do with the marriage of the clergy, particularly with nuns, although he did not permit any steps to be taken against those who had married. He wrote to his Councillors at Torgau on October 4, 1523, that to undertake any alteration or innovation would be difficult, more particularly in these days when he had to anticipate trouble "for our country and people" from the opponents of Lutheranism; "he did not think that a clergyman ought to earn his stipend by idleness and the taking of wives, and by works which he himself condemned."[1] In May, 1524, we see from one of Luther's letters to Spalatin that difficulties had been raised at the Court concerning the remuneration of the married clergy by the Government. In this letter he recommends Johann Apel, formerly Canon of Würzburg, who had married a nun, for a post at the University of Wittenberg, and gives special advice in case his marriage should prove an obstacle ("*quod si uxorcula obstet*," etc.). He here condemns the faint-hearted action of the Elector, and remarks, that he will not thereby escape the animosity of his foes, seeing that he notoriously "favours heretics and provides for them."[2]

Luther did not lose his habit of jesting with his friends, though his witticisms are neither proper nor edifying: "I am bound in the meshes of my mistress's tresses," he writes to one,[3] and to another, that it all seemed "very strange" to him and he could hardly realise he had "become a

[1] "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 641.
[2] On May 11, 1524, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 340.
[3] In the letter quoted above, p. 174, n. 3.

married man, but the evidence was so strong that he was in honour bound to believe it"; and to a third, since God had taken him captive unawares in the bonds of holy matrimony, he would be obliged to confirm this with a "collation" [dinner-party], therefore he and Mrs. Catherine begged him to send a cask of the best Torgau beer for a good drink; should "it turn out not to be good, the sender would have to drink it all himself as a penalty."[1] He speaks later in the same jocose fashion of his "Katey" as the "Kette" [chain] to which he is tied, and rather indelicately plays on his wife's maiden name: "I lie on the bier ['Bore' = mod. Germ. 'Bahre'], i.e. I am dead to the world. My Catena [Kette, or chain] rattles her greetings to you and your Catena." This to Wenceslaus Link, the former Vicar of the Augustinians, who was already married.[2]

Such jokes were likely to be best appreciated in the circle of apostate priests and monks.

But many earnest men of Luther's own party, who like Melanchthon and Schurf, feared evil consequences from the marriage, were little disposed for such trifling.

Luther jestingly complains of such critics: "The wise men who surrounded him" were greatly incensed at his marriage;[3] he says he knew beforehand that "evil tongues would wag" and, in order that the marriage might "not be hindered," he had "made all haste to consummate it."[4]

Friends and followers living at a distance expressed strong disapproval of his conduct when it was already too late. The Frankfurt Patrician, Hamman von Holzhausen, wrote on July 16, 1525, to his son Justinian, who was studying at Wittenberg: "I have read your letter telling me that Martinus Lutherus has entered the conjugal state; I fear he will be evil spoken of and that it may cost him a great falling off."[5]

It was, however, useless for the new husband to attempt to

[1] To Leonard Koppe, June 21, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 202.

[2] To Wenceslaus Link, July 20, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 222.

[3] In the letter quoted above, p. 182, n. 4: "*Vehementer irritantur sapientes etiam inter nostros.*" These are the followers whom he had complained of already on April 10, 1525: "*Nostri sapienticuli quotidie idem (coniugium) ridere.*" To Spalatin, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 153.

[4] To Amsdorf, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 314, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 204.

[5] "Archiv für Frankfurter Gesch.," 7, 1855, p. 102 in Enders, "Briefwechsel Luthers," 5, p. 195, n. 4.

defend himself against the consequences by excuses such as the following: "I am neither in love nor consumed by passion, but I esteem my wife highly."[1] According to his own assertion the step had not been taken under stress of sensual passion, seeing that it was closely bound up with his theology. "I had firmly determined, for the honour of matrimony," he says in the Table-Talk, "before ever I took a wife, that had I had to die unexpectedly, or were lying on my death-bed, I would have wedded some pious maiden."[2] He again assures us, that even when an old man and incapable of begetting children, he would still have taken a wife "merely in order to do honour to the married state and testify to his contempt for the shameful immorality and evil living of the Papacy."[3]

We are here confronted with a strange psychological phenomenon, a candidate for death who is at the same time one for marriage.

Luther, however, speaks so frequently of this abnormal idea of marrying at the hour of death, that he may gradually have come to look upon it as something grand. In the case of most people death draws the thoughts to the severing of all earthly ties, but Luther, on the contrary, is desirous of forming new ones at the very moment of dissolution. He arrives at this paradox only by means of two highly questionable ideas, viz. that he must exhibit the utmost defiance and at the same time vindicate the sacred character of marriage. It would have been quite possible for him without a wife to show his defiant spirit, and he had already asserted his doctrine concerning marriage so loudly and bluntly, that this fresh corroboration by means of such a marriage was quite unnecessary. What was wanted was, that he should vindicate his own act, which appeared to many of his friends both troublesome and detrimental. Hence his endeavours to conceal its true character by ingenious excuses.

Luther's Catholic opponents were loud in the expression of their lively indignation at the sacrilegious breaking of their vows by monk and nun; some embodied the same in satires designed to check the spread of the movement and

[1] To Amsdorf, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 204.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 167.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

to open the eyes of Luther's followers. One saying of Erasmus has frequently been quoted: A wedding was the usual end of a comedy, but here it was the termination of a tragedy. The actual wording of the somewhat lengthy passage runs thus: "In the comic opera the fuss usually ends in a wedding and then all is quiet; in the case of sovereigns their tragedies also frequently come to a similar conclusion, which is not particularly advantageous to the people, but is better than a war. . . . Luther's tragedy seems likely to end in the same way. The Monk has taken a nun to wife . . . Luther has now become calmer and his pen no longer makes the same noise. There is none so wild but that a wife can tame him."[1] Erasmus, however, speedily withdrew his last words, writing that Luther has become more virulent than ever.[2]

More in place than such satires were the serious expressions of disapproval and regret on the part of Catholics concerning the terrible fall of the quondam monk and minister of the altar, by reason of his invalid marriage with the nun. Hieronymus Dungersheim of Leipzig was later to raise his voice in a protest of this sort, addressed to Luther, which may be considered as an echo of the feeling awakened in the minds of many by the news of Luther's marriage and as such may serve as a striking historical testimony: "O unhappy, thrice unhappy man! Once you zealously taught, supported by Divine testimonies and agreeably with the Church of God, that the insolence of the flesh must be withstood by penance and prayer; now you have the fallen woman living with you and give yourself up to serve the flesh under the pretence of marriage, blinded as you are by self-indulgence, pride and passion; by your example you lead others to similar wickedness. . . . What a startling change, what inconstancy! Formerly a monk, now in the midst of a world you once forsook; formerly a priest, now, as you yourself believe, without any priestly character and altogether laicised; formerly in a monk's habit, now dressed as a secular; formerly a Christian, now a Husite; formerly in the true faith, now a mere Picard; formerly exhorting the devout to chastity and perseverance, now enticing them to

[1] "Opp.," Lugd. Batav., 1703, t. 3, col. 900. Erasmus to Nicholas Everardus, Präses in Holland, from Basle, December 24, 1525.

[2] *Ibid.*, col. 919, to Franciscus Sylvius, from Basle, March 13, 1526.

tread their vow under foot and to deliver themselves without compunction into the hands of the Evil One!"[1]

In the above, light has been thrown upon the numerous legends attaching to Luther's wedding at Wittenberg, and their true value may now be better appreciated.

It is clear, for instance, from the facts recorded, that it is incorrect to accuse Luther of not having complied with the then formalities, and of having consummated the marriage before even attempting to conclude these. The distinction mentioned above between the two acts of June 13 and 27, each of which had its special significance, was either unknown to or ignored by these objectors. Were we merely to consider the due observance of the formalities, then there is no doubt that these were complied with, save that objection might be raised as to the legal status of the pastor. But, on the other hand, Canon Law was plainly and distinctly opposed to the validity of a marriage contracted between parties bound by solemn monastic vows. Thus from the point of view of civil law the regularity of Luther's new status was very doubtful, as both Canon Law and the Law of the Empire did not recognise the marriages of priests and monks, and lawyers were forced to base their decisions upon such laws. We shall have to speak later of Luther's anger at the "quibbles" of the lawyers, and his anger had some reason, viz. his well-founded fear lest his marriage should not be recognised as valid by the lawyers, and hence that his children would be stamped as illegitimate and as incapable of inheriting.

The false though frequently repeated statement, that Catherine von Bora was confined a fortnight after her marriage with Luther can be traced back to a letter of Erasmus, dated December 24, 1525, giving too hasty credence to malicious reports.[2] Erasmus himself, however, distinctly retracted this statement in another letter of March 13, 1526: "The previous report of the woman's delivery," he writes, "was untrue, but now it is said she is in a certain condition."[3] As his previous statement was thought to be correct, doubts were raised as to the authenticity of the second letter; the objections are, however, worthless; both letters are taken from the same set of the oldest collection of the

[1] "*Articuli sive libelli triginta*," art. 17, p. 87 *seq.*
[2] "Opp.," Lugd. Batav., 1703, 3, col. 900, ep. 781.
[3] *Ibid.*, col. 919, ep. 801.

correspondence of Erasmus, and, from their first appearance, were ever held to be genuine.

Indeed, the assumption that Luther had unlawful intercourse with Catherine von Bora before his marriage is founded solely and entirely on certain reports already discussed, viz. his intimacy with the escaped nuns generally.

It is true that soon after the marriage Luther speaks of Catherine von Bora as his "Mistress" ("Metze") in whose tresses he is bound,[1] but the word he uses had not at that time the opprobrious meaning it conveys in modern German; it simply meant a girl or woman, and was a term of endearment in common use.

An assertion made by Joachim von der Heyden, a Leipzig Master, has also been quoted; in a public writing of August 10, 1525, addressed to Catherine von Bora, he reproached her with having conducted herself like a dancing-girl in her flight from the convent to Wittenberg, and there, as was said, having lived in an open and shameless manner with Luther before she took him as her husband.[2] A circumstance which must not be overlooked is, that these words were intended for Catherine herself, and appear to come from a man who believed what he was saying. Yet on examination we see that he rests his assertion merely on hearsay: "as was said." The "dancing-girl," again, was adduced merely by way of comparison, though assuredly not a complimentary one, and refers either to the very worldly manners of the escaped nun, or to the secular, perhaps even scarcely modest dress, for which she exchanged her habit on her flight or afterwards. It is probable that at Leipzig, where Heyden lived, and which was one of the headquarters of anti-Lutheranism, something more definite would have been urged, had anything really been known of any actual immorality between Catherine and Luther.

Another bitter opponent of Luther's, Simon Lemnius, who has also been appealed to, likewise adduces no positive or definite facts. Among the inventions of his fancy contained in the "Monachopornomachia" he left us, he does not even mention any illicit intercourse of Luther with Bora before his marriage, though in this satire he makes the wives of Luther, Spalatin, and Justus Jonas give vent to plentiful obscene remarks touching other matters. He merely relates—and this only by poet's licence—how Bora, after overwhelming Luther with reproaches on account of his alleged attempt to jilt her, finally dragged him away with her to the wedding.[3]

Since in this work it is history in the strict sense which speaks, only such evidence can be admitted against Luther as would be

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 322; see above, p. 183.

[2] See Enders, "Briefwechsel Luthers," 6, p. 334.

[3] See Strobel, "Neue Beiträge zur Literatur," 3, 1, p. 137 ff. Cp. Höfler, "SB. der k. böhm. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften," 1892, p. 110 f. Denifle states, "Luther," 1², p. 284, n. 3, that there is a specimen of the above work in the town library at Mayence.

accepted as proof in a court of law, and mere conjectures would be out of place. We have seen the historic complaint made by Melanchthon of Luther's "effeminacy" and the "exciting of his passions by the nuns who pursued him with the utmost cunning,"[1] and have some idea of the scandal created by the quondam monk through his light-hearted intercourse with these women who had quitted their seclusion; we can now understand how natural was the gossip to which he himself and his friends bear witness. It is true that men like Eberlin of Günzburg, the apostate Franciscan, said at the time that the devil was busy everywhere stirring up "wicked and vexatious suspicions and calumnies" against Luther, etc.[2] Others gave vent to their spite against the manners of the ex-nuns, who were bringing the evangel into dispute.[3] We can comprehend such reflections as the following, made at a later date by indignant Catholic observers, even though in an historical work such as this we cannot make them our own. "To have remained spotless amidst such dangers Luther would have to have been an angel. Whoever has any knowledge of human nature, and knows that God as a rule punishes pride and haughtiness by this particular vice, will not wonder that many have their doubts as to Luther's unblemished life before he took a wife."[4]

2. The Peasant-War. Polemics

That the preaching of the new Evangel had a great part in the origin of the frightful peasant rising of 1525 is a fact, which has been admitted even by many non-Catholic historians in modern days.

"We are of opinion," P. Schreckenbach writes in 1895, "that Luther had a large share in the revolution," and he endorses his opinion by his observations on "Luther's warfare against the greatest conservative power of the day," and the "ways and means he chose with which to carry on his war."[5] Fr. v. Bezold, in 1890, in his "History of the German Reformation," remarked concerning Luther's answer to the hostile treatment he received from the Diet at Nuremberg (1524), and his allusions to "the mad, tipsy Princes": "Luther should never have written in such a way had he not already made up his mind to act as leader of a Revolution. That he should have expected the German nation of those days to listen to such passionate language from the mouth of its 'Evangelist' and 'Elias' without being carried beyond the bounds of law and order, was a *naïveté* only to be explained by his ignorance of the world and his exclusive atten-

[1] See above, pp. 145, 177.

[2] "Eberlins Sämtliche Schriften," ed. L. Enders, 3, p. 165.

[3] Eobanus Hessus says of the escaped nuns: "*Nulla Phyllis nonnis est nostris mammosior.*" Cp. above, p. 125, n. 1.

[4] Denifle, "Luther," 1², p. 284.

[5] "Luther und der Bauernkrieg," Oldenburg, 1895, p. 8.

tion to religious interests. Herein lies his greatness and his weakness."[1] Concerning the effects of such language upon the people, the same historian wrote, as late as 1908: "How else but in a material sense was the plain man to interpret Luther's proclamation of Christian freedom and his extravagant strictures on the parsons and nobles?"[2]

Luther's Catholic contemporaries condemned in the strongest manner his share in the unchaining of the revolt; they failed entirely to appreciate the "greatness" referred to above.

One who was well acquainted with his writings and published a polemical work in Latin against him at that time, referring to certain passages, some of which we have already met, makes the following representations to him on his responsibility in the Peasant War. It was he who first raised the call to arms, and it was impossible for him to wash his hands of all share in the revolt, even though he had told the people that they were not to make use of force without the consent of the authorities and had subsequently condemned the rising with violence. "The common people pay no attention to that," he tells him, "but merely obey what pleases them in Luther's writings and sermons." "You declared in your public writings,[3] that they were to assail the Pope and the Cardinals with every weapon available, and wash their hands in their blood. You called all the bishops who would not follow your teaching, idolatrous priests and ministers of the devil; you said that the bishops deserved to be wiped off the face of the earth in a great rising." "You called those, 'dear children of God and true Christians,' who make every effort for the destruction of the bishoprics and the extermination of episcopal rule. You said also that whoever obeyed the bishops was the devil's own servant. You called the monasteries dens of murderers, and incited the people to pull them down."[4]

A strong wave of anti-clerical and of politico-social commotion due to unjust oppression prevailed among the peasantry in many parts of Germany even before Luther came forward. But it was the gospel of freedom, the mistaken approbation found in biblical passages for the desire for equality among the classes and a juster distribution of property, as well as the example of the great spiritual up-

[1] "Gesch. der deutschen Reformation," Berlin, 1890, p. 447.

[2] "Die Kultur der Gegenwart," T. 2, Abt. 5, 1, Berlin, 1908, p. 68.

[3] The passages were quoted above, cp. pp. 6 f., 9 f., 49 f., 55 f., 63, 69, 100 f., 107.

[4] "Dissertationes quatuor contra M. Lutherum et Lutheranismi fautores," Moguntiæ, 1532, fol. 19. See Janssen-Pastor, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. trans.), 4, 1900, p. 56 ff.

heaval then going on, which rendered the crisis acute, and incited the peasants to make their extravagant and violent demands.

An attempt was made to conceal the revolutionary character of the movement by explaining it as mainly religious.

The "Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia," was headed, for instance, by a demand for liberty to preach the Gospel and for congregations to have the right of choosing their own pastors.[1] It was believed by those who drew up these Articles that all the claims, even those relating to the tithes, to hunting, fishing, forest rights, etc., could be proved from Holy Scripture; only then, they said, were they ready to abandon them when they were refuted by Holy Writ; at the same time, however, they reserved to themselves the right to make in the future such additional demands as they might come to recognise as being in accordance with Scripture. Luther's ideas were also embodied in the thirty Articles of "Squire Helferich and the Knights Heinz und Karsthanns," indeed, they were for the most part couched in the very words of Luther's writings and the 28th Article swore deadly hostility to all his foes.[2]

[1] Ed. A. Goetze in "Hist. Vierteljahrsschrift," 4, 1901, p. 1 ff.

[2] In Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 697, after a reference to the oppression of the peasantry, their insolence and desire for innovation, we read: "In addition to all this there now supervened the preaching of the new Evangel. . . . A higher warrant was bestowed upon the complaints and the demands concerning secular and material matters. . . . The Christian liberty of which the New Testament speaks and which Luther proclaimed was applied directly to temporal questions. Paul's words that in Christ there is neither bond nor free became a weapon. . . . Even the Old Testament was also appealed to. From the circumstance that God had granted to our first parents dominion over the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and the beasts of the field, they concluded that at least the right to fish and hunt was common to all. Great opposition was raised, above all, to the taxes due to the monasteries and clergy, and even the very existence of the monastic state and temporal authority of the clergy was called into question. Such ideas were readily fostered among the excited masses when the new preaching found its way amongst them by word of mouth or in writings"; p. 701: "Luther, however, was the man of the Evangel on whom the eyes of the great mass of the peasants in southern Germany were directed when their rising commenced." The editors of the Weimar edition of Luther's writings (18, 1908) remark in the first introduction to the same (p. 279): "The rebellion found its encouragement and support in Luther's victorious gospel of ecclesiastical reformation; ultimately, however, it secularised the new gospel. Whence it came to pass that in the end, not Luther, but rather the religious

The peasants in the Rhine province and about Mayence in their rising in May, 1525, demanded not merely the liberty to choose their own pastors and to preach the Gospel, but also that the preachers of the new faith imprisoned in Mayence should be set free. Their claim to choose their pastors, which was likewise made elsewhere, for instance, in the "Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia," signified nothing less than the intention to fill the posts with preachers of the new faith.[1]

"The rebels everywhere either supported or opposed the Evangelical demands, those of Evangelical views joining the rebels with the idea that they would be able to enforce their wishes by this means." This explains why, after the rising had been put down, the Catholic lords were disposed "to look on Lutheranism as no better than rebellion."[2] These words, written by a Protestant historian, refer to the Rhine Province, but they are equally applicable elsewhere. So, too, what he says of this district may also be said generally, viz. that the enthusiastic expectation, which was widespread in Lutheran circles, of a great change before the approaching end of the world, helped to make of the followers of the new faith supporters of the peasants. Luther encouraged such fanatical ideas among his readers till the very outbreak of the revolt. (See below, p. 200 f.)

"What wonder," the same historian says, "that when the social revolution broke out in the spring, Luther's persecuted followers thought they recognised the beginning of the change, and in many instances made common cause with the peasants and the lower classes of the towns. Luther himself had no wish to carry through his religious enterprise with the help either of the knights or of the peasants,

fanatics, above all, Thomas Münzer, drew the excited masses under their spell and impressed their stamp on the whole movement." Concerning Luther's attitude towards the revolt at the time it was preparing, we read on p. 280: "Up to that time [the spring of 1525], Luther had taken no direct part in the social movement. He was, however, without doubt indirectly engaged; his writings had fallen like firebrands on the inflammable masses, who misunderstood them, interpreted them according to their own ideas and forged from them weapons for their own use."

[1] Fritz Herrmann, "Evangelische Regungen zu Mainz in den ersten Zeiten der Reformation," in "Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgesch.," No. 100, 1910 (p. 275–304), p. 297.

[2] F. Herrmann, *ibid.*, p. 298.

but his followers were not equal to making the necessary distinction between the spiritual and the temporal."[1]

Luther and his preachers had so frequently brought forward such disparaging and degrading charges against the secular, and still more against the spiritual authorities,[2] that clear-sighted contemporaries, such as Bartholomew von Usingen, foretold a revolution,[3] as the result of such discourses and writings. The destruction of the episcopal power, which, under the conditions then prevailing, was so closely bound up with the secular, meant a radical revolution in the law of property obtaining in the German Empire.

The "Christian freedom" of all, the equality of high and low in the common priesthood, was proclaimed in the most incautious and seductive terms. The peasants were taught by itinerant and often fanatical preachers, concerning their real or alleged rights as vouched for by Holy Scripture. Thus the esteemed Strasburg preacher, Caspar Hedio, of the Rhinegau, in a sermon which he delivered on the Wachholder Heide, near Erbach, explained to the people his views on the customary payment of tithes; his words acting like a charm: He thought the peasants should pay tithes only under protest, though they were nevertheless not to attempt to abrogate the payment by force. Once roused, however, who was to keep the crowd within these

[1] F. Herrmann, p. 296. W. Vogt, "Die Vorgesch. des Bauernkrieges" (in "Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgesch.," 20, 1887), points to the general expectation prevailing, more particularly in the south-west of Germany, that a fundamental change in the existing state of things was imminent. "Every reform, however, even the most trifling, in the social sphere encroached upon the political and even the ecclesiastical domain, for the nobility and clergy, whose authority and possessions were the subject of discussion, were at the same time political and ecclesiastical factors. . . . All felt that in the last instance the appeal would be to force" (p. 142).

[2] For examples, see above, p. 152 ff., and below, p. 297 ff. Cp. also P. Drews, "Entsprach das Staatskirchentum Luthers Ideal?" Tübingen, 1908, p. 31.

[3] Concerning Usingen's utterance of 1523: "*Nescitis populum esse bestiam . . . quæ sanguinem sitit?*" etc., cp. N. Paulus, "Barthol. Usingen," p. 102. And (*ibid.*) another striking saying of Usingen concerning the preacher Culsamer. He declared that he feared Germany would see a storm similar to that which Constantinople had suffered at the hands of the iconoclasts (p. 101). The preacher Eberlin von Günzburg announced in 1521: "There will be no end to the impositions of the clergy until the peasants rise and hang and drown good and bad alike; then the cheating will meet with its reward." See Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," 2^{18}, p. 490 ff.

limits? In 1524 Hedio had two sermons, preached on this subject in Strasburg, printed together with a circular letter addressed to the inhabitants of the Rhinegau, "which, there can be no doubt, exercised a certain influence upon the rising there."[1] In the circular he proposed, that the people themselves should go in search of capable preachers if the ecclesiastical authorities did not send such.[2]

A far-reaching social movement had been at work among the peasants, more particularly in many districts of the south-west of Germany, even previous to the rise of Lutheranism. They raised protests, which in many instances were justifiable, against the oppression under which they laboured. A crisis seemed imminent there as early as 1513 and 1514, and the feeling was general that a settlement of the difficulties could only be brought about by violence. The ferment in many places assumed an anticlerical character, which was all the more natural seeing that the landowners and gentry who were the chief cause of the dissatisfaction were either clergymen, like the Prince-Bishops, or closely allied with the Church and her multifarious secular institutions. The ill-feeling against the clergy was even then being stirred up by exaggerated descriptions of their idle life, their luxury and their unworthy conduct.

To seek to represent the movement, as has been done, as an exclusively social one, is, even for the period before Luther, not quite correct, although it certainly was mainly social. Yet it was, as a matter of fact, the new ideas scattered among the people by Luther and Zwingli, and the preaching of the apostasy, which brought the unrest so quickly to a head. The anticlerical ideas of the religious innovators, combined with social class antagonism, lent an irresistible force to the rising. Hence the Peasant War has recently been described on the Protestant side as a "religious movement," called forth by the discussion of first principles to which the Reformation gave rise, and which owed its violent character to the religious contrast which it brought out.[3] The expert on this period who

[1] F. Herrmann, *loc. cit.*, p. 297.

[2] The circular letter, reprinted in the "Annalen des Vereins für Nassauishe Gesch.," 17, 1882, p. 16 ff.

[3] W. Stolze, "Der deutsche Bauernkrieg," Halle, 1907, p. v.

writes thus, proves and justifies his opinion, showing that Zwingli and Luther "were the primary cause" of the War, not indeed directly, but because once the peasants had become familiar with the new "biblical" ideas, which were so favourable to their cause, they refused to stand by and see such doctrines suppressed by violence, and preferred to take up arms against the Catholic rulers and their energetic anti-Reformation measures.[1] According to the same writer it is necessary to distinguish carefully between what the peasants themselves represented in the course of the revolt as the moving cause, i.e. the social disabilities of which they complained (for instance in the Twelve Articles), and that which actually produced the rising.

Nor must it be overlooked that, at the moment when passions were already stirred up to their highest pitch, many attempts were made on the Lutheran side to pacify the people. The catastrophe foreseen affrighted those who were on the spot, and who feared lest the responsibility might fall upon their shoulders. Quite recently a forgotten pamphlet, written by an anonymous Lutheran preacher and dating from the commencement of the movement, has been republished, in which, after some pious exhortations, the author expresses his firm hope that the fear of God would succeed in triumphing over the excited passions; even biblical quotations against misuse of the new evangelical freedom are to be found in this well-intentioned booklet.[2] Then as now attention was drawn to Luther's doctrine concerning obedience to the powers that be, which required of "the true Christian" that he should even "allow himself to be flayed," and out of love of the cross renounce all desire for revenge (xiv. 4).

Notwithstanding all this, the great responsibility which Lutheranism shares in the matter remains. "It is no purely historical and objective view," says another Protes-

[1] Cp. particularly p. 22 ff. In "Archiv. f. Reformationsgesch.," 1909, Hft. 1, p. 160, the author's blame of the "previous prejudiced insistence on the social side of the Peasant War" meets with recognition; we read there, "the emphasis laid on the religious side by Stolze appears to be thoroughly justified."

[2] "Die scharf Metz wider die, die sich evangelisch nennen und doch dem Evangelium entgegen sind," 1525, ed. W. Lucke, in "Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation," vol. i., No. 3, Halle, 1906

tant historian, "but rather an apologetic and false assumption, which attempts to deny the fact, that Luther's evangelical preaching most strongly encouraged and brought to a crisis the social excitement which had been simmering among the lowest classes since the fifteenth century. The agitation stirred up by the preachers who followed in Luther's footsteps contributed in a still greater degree towards this result."[1]

Special research in the different parts of the wide area covered by the rising has to-day confirmed even more completely the opinion that the accusations urged against Lutheranism by the olden supporters of the Church were, after all, not so unjust in this particular. The much-abused Johann Cochlæus, who made such charges, is rightly spoken of by the last-mentioned historian as being "more suited" to depict that revolutionary period than the diplomatic and cautious Sleidanus, or the Protestant theological admirers and worshippers of Luther.[2] The learned Hieronymus Emser wrote, in the stormy year 1525, a work "Against

[1] W. Maurenbrecher, "Gesch. der kath. Reformation," I. Nördlingen, 1880, p. 257. Janssen, in his "Hist. of the German People," has brought this point out clearly. See more particularly Engl. trans., volume iii.: "The populace inflamed by preaching and the press," and volume iv.: "The social revolution," where it is pointed out that even apart from Luther's action and that of his followers, risings were imminent, but that the "social revolution first received the stamp of universal and common tendency from the conditions created or developed among the people by the religious disturbances." Concerning the effect of the sermons and pamphlets on the people we read in the original, vol. 2**, p. 406, n. 3, in a letter of Archduke Ferdinand to the Pope, that the deluded people believed, "se Dei mandata nunc in templis, circulinis, nundinis discutiebantur," etc. Johann Adam Möhler, in the Church History (ed. Gams), which appeared after his death, compares I. p. 118 the effects of the preaching of the liberty of the children of God in the primitive Church, and describes the pure, virtuous life of self-renunciation which resulted, how the lower classes learnt to be content with their lot and the slaves became more faithful to their masters. "The contrast between the effects of the old gospel and the new evangel gave the most convincing proof of the difference between them." "From the spirit of the flesh which combined with the religious in Luther's writings to form one living whole, a tendency to revolt gradually spread over all Germany; ecclesiastical and secular, divine and human, spiritual and corporal, all ran riot together in the people's minds; everywhere prevailed a fanatical, perverted longing for the liberty of the children of God." p. 116. When Luther urged the Princes to severity in repressing the movement, his ruling idea was "to repress the opinion that elements dangerous to public order were embodied in his principles" (p. 118).

[2] W. Maurenbrecher, "Studien und Skizzen zur Gesch. der Reformationszeit," 1874, p. 22.

Luther's abominations," a large part of which is devoted to proving what is already explained in the sub-title of the book, "How, and why, and in what words, Luther, in his books, urges and exhorts to rebellion." Emser also gave indignant expression to his conviction in some verses intended for general circulation.

Luther was directly implicated in the beginning of the rising when the "Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia" was forwarded to him by the insurgents. The peasants invited him, with confidence, "to declare what was of Divine right."[1] Luther's honoured name came first in the list of learned men who were to be consulted. The Wittenberg professor grasped the full importance of the moment; he felt that the direction of German affairs had been placed in his hands. Naturally he did not wish to be the one to let loose the terrible storm, nor did he, as the representative and "deliverer" of the people, wish to repulse the movement which had been so long favourable to him, and the demands of which were, in part at least, perfectly justifiable. He found himself in a position exactly similar to that which he had occupied formerly in regard to the Knights, who were anxious to take up arms, and with whom he had, up to a certain point, made common cause, but whose project afterwards appeared to him too dangerous and compromising to the cause of the evangel. In the question of the Twelve Articles it was difficult, nay, impossible, for him not to give offence either to the gentry or to the populace, or to avoid barring the way for the new evangel in one direction or the other. He determined to seek a middle course. But the tragic consequences of the position he had always assumed, the circumstances of the day and his unrestrained temper, caused him to give mortal offence to both sides, to the lords as well as to the peasants.

First, he flung his "Exhortation to Peace" on the field of battle—no mere figure of speech, as, at the time of writing,

[1] Cp. the writing, "Handlung, Ordnung und Instruktion," in which the delegates to be chosen to negotiate with the Swabian League on the question of "divine law," are referred, among others, to "Hertzog Friederich von Sachsen sampt D. Martin Luther, oder Philipp Melanchthon oder Pomeran [Bugenhagen]." In the introduction of the Weim. ed. (see above, p. 191, n. 2), p. 280. Luther refers to this passage in his "Ermanunge zum Fride auff die 12 Artikel" with the words: "particularly as they appeal to me by name in the other writing."

the tumult had already broken out and the horrors of Weinsberg been enacted (April 16, 1525), though of this Luther was ignorant when he composed the pamphlet. Formerly this writing was thought to have been written in May, but as a matter of fact it belongs to the period just after April 18.[1]

In this writing, as well as in the two following which treat of the rising, certain sides of Luther's character are displayed which must be examined from the historical and psychological standpoint. The second, which was the outcome of the impressions made by the bloody contest, consists of only one sheet and is entitled "Against the murderous, thieving hordes of Peasants," or more shortly, "Against the insurgent Peasants"; it, too, was written before the complete defeat of the rebels in the decisive days of May.[2] The third is the "Circular letter concerning the stern booklet against the Peasants," of the same year, and belongs to the time when the conquerors, flushed with victory, were raging against the vanquished.[3]

The three writings must be considered in conjunction with the circumstances which called them forth. Written in the very thick of the seething ferment, they glow with all the fire of their author, whose personal concern in the matter was so great. Whoever weighs their contents at the present day will be carried back to the storm of that period, and will marvel at the strength of the spirit which inspires them, but at the same time be surprised at the picture the three together present. He will ask, and not without cause, which of the three is most to be regretted; surely the third, for the unmistakable blunders of the author, who gives the fullest play to feeling and fancy to the detriment of calm reason, go on increasing in each pamphlet.

In the first, the "Exhortation," the author seeks to put the truth before, and to pacify the Princes and gentry, more particularly those Catholics who, subsequent to the Diet of Nuremberg, in 1524, had entered the lists against the innovations. He also would fain instruct and calm the peasants,

[1] The pamphlet in "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, 1908, p. 279 ff. Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 271 ff. For the date see *ibid.*, Weim. ed., 18, p. 281, and Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 793.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 344 ff.; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 303 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 375 ff. = 310 ff.

his "dear Masters and Brothers." Had Luther been endowed with a clear perception of the position of affairs, and seen the utter uselessness of any attempt merely to stem the movement, he would not at this critical juncture have still further irritated the rebels by the attacks upon the gentry, into which he allowed himself to break out, and which were at once taken advantage of.

He cries, for instance, to the authorities: "Your government consists in nothing else but fleecing and oppressing the poor common people in order to support your own magnificence and arrogance, till they neither can nor will endure it. The sword is at your throat; you think you sit fast in the saddle and that it will be impossible to overthrow you. But you will find that your self-confidence and obstinacy will be the breaking of your necks." "You are bringing it upon yourselves and wish to get your heads broken. There is no use in any further warning or admonishing." "God has so ordained it that your furious raging neither can nor shall any longer be endured. You must become different and give way to the Word of God; if you refuse to do so willingly, then you will be forced to it by violence and riot. If these peasants do not accomplish it, others must."[1]

He admonishes the peasants to suffer in a Christian manner, and to be ready to endure even persecution and oppression willingly. Such is the spirit of the evangel which he has always preached. The gospel made the material life to consist in nothing else but suffering, injustice, crosses, patience and contempt for all temporal goods, even life itself. Hence they must not base their earthly claims on the gospel. "Murderous prophets" had, however, come amongst them who, by their false interpretation of the Bible, injured the cause of the gospel and incited men to the use of force, which was forbidden. He himself had been so successful and yet had abhorred violence, which made the spread of his doctrine so much the more marvellous. "Now you interfere," you wish to help the cause of the evangel, but you "are damaging it" by your violent action. The effect of these words which form the central point of his train of thought he destroys by fresh attacks upon the lords and Princes: If they "forbid the preaching of the gospel and oppress the people so unbearably, then they deserve that God should cast them from their thrones."[2] Luther fancies he already sees the hands stretched out to execute the sentence, and concludes by addressing the Princes thus: "Tyrants seldom die in their beds, as a rule they perish by a bloody death. Since it is certain that you govern tyrannically and savagely, forbidding the preaching of the gospel and fleecing and oppressing the people, there is no comfort or hope for you but to perish as those like you have perished."[3]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 293 f. = 273 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 300 = 277.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 329 f. = 296 f. In the Weim. ed., 18, p. 790, it is rightly

Such words as these were scarcely in place on the very eve of the terrible struggle. Luther, in his excitement and his anxiety concerning his teaching, was not a fit judge of the condition of things. It is true that he fully realised that many of the burdens on account of which the peasants had risen in revolt were far too oppressive,[1] and the thoughts which he expresses on this matter are such as might well be taken to heart for all time. But he places the interests of his interpretation of the Bible so much in the foreground that he declares, at the very outset, that what pleased him best in the Peasants' "Articles," was their "readiness to be guided by clear, plain, undeniable passages of Scripture; since it is right and fair that no man's conscience should be instructed and guided otherwise than by Holy Writ."[2]

Never has the liberty of Bible interpretation been proclaimed under circumstances more momentous. Luther could not have been ignorant of the fact, that the armed multitude and their preachers, particularly the fanatical Anabaptists, had also, like him, set up a new interpretation of their own of the Bible, one, however, which agreed so well with their leanings that they would never relinquish it for any other.

Owing to the divergence of their teaching, and to the fact that they were led by fanatics of Münzer's persuasion, Luther came to see in the warlike disturbances a mere work of the devil; hence he himself, the chief foe of hell, feels it his duty to enter the lists against Satan; the latter is seeking "to destroy and devour" both him and his evangel, using the bloodthirsty spirit of revolt as his instrument, but let the devil devour him and the result will be a belly-cramp.[3] In his excitement he fancies he sees signs and wonders. "I and my friends will pray to God that He may either reconcile you or else graciously prevent events from taking the course you wish, though the terrible signs and wonders of this time make me sad of heart."[4] Like the end of the world, which was supposed to be approaching, the

remarked that Luther sees in the peasants of South Germany, to whom the "Ermanunge zum Fride" was principally addressed, persecuted men, and that from a distance he welcomes their rising with a certain sympathy.

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 717; cp. p. 792 ff.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 291; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 272.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 316=p. 288. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 334=p. 299.

" signs in the heavens and the wonders on the earth " play their part in his mind. " They forebode no good to you," he prophesies to the authorities, " and no good will come to you," for " the many gruesome signs which have taken place till now in the heavens and on the earth point to some great misfortune and a striking change in the German land."[1]

Shortly after the publication of the so-called " Exhortation to Peace," the news reached Wittenberg of the sanguinary encounters which had already taken place. Everything was upside down. What dire confusion would ensue should the peasants prove victorious ? Luther now asked himself what the new evangel could win supposing the populace gained the upper hand, and also how the rulers who had hitherto protected his cause would fare in the event of the rebels being successful in the Saxon Electorate and at Wittenberg. Says the most recent Protestant biographer of Luther : " Now that the rebellion was directed against the Princes whose kindness and pure intention were so well known to him, passionate rage with the rabble took the place of discriminating justice."[2] The fanatical mob that accompanied Thomas Münzer whetted his tongue. We can understand how Luther, now thoroughly alarmed by what he saw on his journeys and preaching-tours throughout the insurgent districts, and by the daily accounts of unheard-of atrocities committed by the rebels, was anxious to take a vigorous part in the attempt to quench the flame. To his mind, with its constitutional disability to perceive more than one thing at a time, nothing is visible but the horrors of the armed rebellion. In " furious wrath " he now mercilessly assails the rebels, allying himself entirely with the Princes. The tract " Against the murderous Peasants," comprising only four pages, was composed about May 4.[3]

" Pure devilry," he says in this passionate and hurriedly composed pamphlet, is urging on the peasants ; they " rob and rage and behave like mad dogs." " Therefore let all who are able, hew them down, slaughter and stab them, openly or in secret, and remember that there is nothing more poisonous, noxious and utterly devilish than a rebel. You must kill him as

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 293=p. 273.
[2] A. Hausrath, " Luthers Leben," 2, p. 55.
[3] K. Müller, " Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," 1910, p. 140.

you would a mad dog; if you do not fall upon him, he will fall upon you and the whole land."[1]

He now will have it that they are not fighting for the Lutheran teaching, nor serving the evangel. "They serve the devil under the appearance of the evangel . . . I believe that the devil feels the approach of the Last Day and therefore has recourse to such unheard-of trickery. . . . Behold what a powerful prince the devil is, how he holds the world in his hands and can knead it as he pleases." "I believe that there are no devils left in hell, but all of them have entered into the peasants."[2]

He therefore invites the authorities to intervene with all their strength. "Whatever peasants are killed in the fray, are lost body and soul and are the devil's own for all eternity." The authorities must resolve to "chastise and slay" so long as they can raise a finger: "Thou, O God, must judge and act. It may be that whoever is killed on the side of the authorities is really a martyr in God's cause."[3] A happier death no man could die. So strange are the times that a Prince may merit heaven more certainly by shedding blood than by saying prayers.

Luther does not forget to exhort the evangelically-minded rulers to remember to offer the "mad peasants," even at the last, "terms, but where this is of no avail to have recourse at once to the sword." Before this, however, he says: "I will not forbid such rulers as are able, to chastise and slay the peasants without previously offering them terms, even though the gospel does not permit it."[4]

He is not opposed to indulgence being shown those who have been led astray. He recommends, that the many "pious folk" who, against their will, were compelled to join the diabolical league, should be spared. At the same time, however, he declares, that they like the others, are "going to the devil. . . . For a pious Christian ought to be willing to endure a hundred deaths rather than yield one hair's breadth to the cause of the peasants."[5]

It has been said it was for the purpose of liberating those who had been compelled to join the insurgents, that he admonished the Princes in such strong terms, even promising them heaven as the reward for their shedding of blood, and that the overthrow of the revolt by every possible means was, though in this sense only, "for Luther a real work of charity." This, however,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 358; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 304.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 358 f.=p. 305. "The violent words of the circular letter 'Wider die . . . Bawren' were really directed against his bitter opponent Thomas Münzer, the 'arch-devil of Mühlhausen,' and the seditious Thuringian peasants." So runs the introduction of the Weimar edition, with which we may, to some extent, agree, though the pamphlet speaks throughout of the rebellious peasants generally; on the very first page we read, however: "More particularly the arch-devil who reigns at Mühlhausen and who incites to nothing but pillage, murder, and bloodshed."

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 360; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 308.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 359=p. 306.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 361=p. 308.

is incorrect, for he does not speak of saving and sparing those who had been led astray until after the passage where he says that the Princes might gain heaven by the shedding of blood; nor is there any inner connection between the passages; he simply says: "There is still one matter to which the authorities might well give attention." "Even had they no other cause for whetting their sword against the peasants, this [the saving of those who had been led astray] would be a more than sufficient reason." After the appeal for mercy towards those who had been forced to fight, there follows the cry: "Let whoever is able help in the slaughter; should you die in the struggle, you could not have a more blessed death." He concludes with Romans xiii. 4; concerning the authorities: "who bear not the sword in vain, avengers to execute wrath upon him that doth evil."[1]

While his indignant pen stormed over the paper, he had been thinking with terror of the consequences of the bloody contest, and of the likelihood of the peasants coming off victorious. He writes, "We know not whether God may not intend to prelude the Last Day, which cannot be far distant, by allowing the devil to destroy all order and government, and to reduce the world to a scene of desolation, so that Satan may obtain the 'Kingdom of this world.'"[2]

The rebels, who had burnt the monasteries and demolished the strongholds and castles in Thuringia and in Luther's own country, were soon to suffer a succession of great reverses. Münzer, the prophet, was defeated in the battle of Frankenhausen on May 15, 1525, and after being put to the torture, made his confession and was executed. Before his end he with great composure implored the Princes to have mercy on the poor, oppressed people. Luther said of his death, that his confession was "mere devilish stupidity" and that his torture should have been made much more severe; Melanchthon, in his history of Münzer, also regretted that he had not been forced to confess that he received his "Revelations" from the devil; he, too, did not think it enough that he should have been tortured only once. Luther, however, was not sorry to see the last of him. "Münzer, with some thousands of others, has unexpectedly been made to bite the dust."[3]

The open supporters of the rising, on account of his second tract, called Luther a hypocrite and flatterer of the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, and p. 359=p. 306.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 360 ff.=307 ff.

[3] Melanchthon's and Luther's words given more in detail in Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 59.

Princes.[1] Even some of his best friends could not understand his ferocity in inciting the lords against the peasants, more especially as it seemed to encourage the victors in their savage treatment of the prisoners, which in some places resembled a massacre.

Luther's friend, Johann Rühel, the Mansfeld councillor, wrote to him, at the time when the pamphlet against the peasants was making the greatest sensation, expressing his misgivings. He reminded him of the words he made use of in the passage last quoted concerning the "scene of desolation" into which the world seemed about to be transformed. This prophecy might prove only too true. "I am sore afraid," he says, "and really it seems as though you were playing the prophet to the gentry, for, indeed, they will leave nothing but a desolate land to their heirs; the people are being chastised so severely that I fear the land of Thuringia and the County [of Mansfeld] will recover from it but slowly. . . . Here they [the victorious party] give themselves up to nothing but robbery and murder."[2] Five days later Rühel again wrote to Luther in tones of warning, saying that he meant well by him, but must nevertheless point out the effect his pamphlet "Against the Peasants" had had on the minds of some: "Be it as it may, it still appears strange to many who are favourably disposed towards you that you should allow the tyrants to slaughter without mercy and tell them that they may thus become martyrs; it is openly said at Leipzig that because the Elector has just died [May 5, 1525] you fear for your own skin and flatter Duke George by approving his undertaking [i.e. his energetic steps against the rising] out of fear for your own skin. I will not presume to judge, but commit it to your own spirit, for I know the saying: '*qui accipit gladium gladio peribit*,' and, again, that the secular power 'beareth not the sword in vain . . . an avenger to execute wrath' [Rom. xiii. 4]. . . . I mean well, and beg you to remember me in your prayers."[3] The writer tells Luther that

[1] Luther to Amsdorf, May 30, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 182: "*adulator principum.*" Luther pronounces the "Curse of the Lord" on those Magdeburg preachers who had sided with the rebels.

[2] On May 21, 1525, Kawerau's edition of the letter in "Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgesch.," No. 100, 1910, p. 339 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 177).

[3] Kawerau's edition, *ibid.*, p. 342 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 180).

"the result may well be that the victors in thus slaughtering without mercy will appeal to Luther, and that thus even the innocent will be condemned in Luther's name."[1] Rühel was a good Lutheran, and his words bear witness to a deep-seated devotion to Luther's spirit and guidance. In his strange zeal for the evangel he urges Luther in this same letter to invite the Archbishop of Mayence and Magdeburg to secularise himself and take a wife.[2]

Luther's intimate friend, Nicholas Hausmann, was also "rather horrified and amazed" at the writing.[3] Complaints came from Zwickau that not only the common people but also many of the learned were falling away from him; it was thought that his manner of writing was very unbecoming, and that he had been unmindful of the poor. The burgomaster of Zwickau maintained that the tract against the peasants was "not theological," i.e. not worthy of a theologian.[4] "A storm of displeasure broke out against

[1] Cp. K. Müller above (p. 201, n. 3), p. 148, where another explanation is given which, however, cannot stand. Müller, p. 140 ff., deals with Barge's "Karlstadt" (vol. ii.), and Barge's reply to his criticism. Barge was of opinion that "it is plain the princes and their mercenaries [in their ruthless treatment of the conquered peasants] understood Luther aright" ("Frühprotestantisches Gemeindechristentum," 1909, p. 333). "Luther, in his pamphlet against the peasants, gave high sanction to the impure lust for blood which had been kindled in the souls of hundreds and thousands who played the part of hangmen. . . . By seeking to exalt the cynical thirst for revenge into a religious sentiment he has stained the cause of the Reformation more than he could have done even by allying himself with the rebels" ("Karlstadt," 2, 1905, p. 357).

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 308 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 186). "I would that in these perilous days you would write a letter of consolation and exhortation to my most gracious lord of Magdeburg concerning his making a change in his mode of life; you understand what I mean. But please send me a copy. I purpose going to Magdeburg to-day to take steps in the matter. Pray God in heaven to give His grace in this serious work and undertaking. Be hopeful; you understand me; it cannot be committed to writing. For God's sake implore, seek and pray that grace and strength may be bestowed on me for the work." Words so pious concerning such a business prove how far men may be carried away by their own prepossession.

[3] Cp. Kolde, "Analecta Lutherana," p. 64.

[4] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 715, with the references p. 794 and Weim. ed., 18, p. 376, Introduction. E. Rolffs ("Preuss. Jahrbücher," 15, 1904, p. 481): "When, incited thereto by his evangel of the freedom of a Christian man, the oppressed and downtrodden peasantry sought by flame and bloodshed to secure for themselves an existence fit for human beings, then he no longer understood his German people. And when, thereupon, he wrote his frightful book, 'Against the murderous and thieving hordes of Peasants,' the German people also ceased to understand him."

Luther . . . his 'stab, slay, hew down' sounded like mockery in the ears of the people when the aristocratic bands were bathing in the blood of the vanquished. . . . The fact is that Luther was not in his heart so indifferent as he made himself out to be in the circular-letter he wrote in defence of his 'severe booklet.'"[1]

Before composing the circular-letter Luther sent a lively letter to Rühel protesting that he was ready to stand by all he had written, and that his conscience was "right in the sight of God." "If there are some innocent people among them, God will surely take care to save and preserve them. But there is cockle among the peasantry. They do not listen to the Word [but to Münzer], and are mad, so that they must be made to listen to the *virga* and the muskets, and . . . serve them right!" "Whoever has seen Münzer may well say that he has seen the devil incarnate, in his utmost fury. O Lord God, where such a spirit prevails among the peasants it is high time for them to be slaughtered like mad dogs. Perhaps the devil feels the approach of the Last Day, therefore he stirs up all this strife. . . . But God is mightier and wiser."[2]

Elsewhere Luther declares that owing to this booklet everything God had wrought for the world by his means was now forgotten; all were against him and threatened him with death. He had even lived to see the phrase, that "the lords might merit heaven by shedding their blood," regarded—though perhaps only ironically—as a denial of his doctrine that there was no possibility of deserving heaven by works. "God help us," they cried, "how has Luther so far forgotten himself! He who formerly taught that a man could arrive at grace and be saved only by faith alone!"[3]

The effect of the reproaches of excessive severity showed itself, nevertheless, to a certain extent in the pamphlet which Luther composed between the 17th and 22nd May on the defeat of Thomas Münzer. The title runs: "A terrible

[1] Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 58 f.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 306 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 181). "This rabble [the peasants under Thomas Münzer] was an enemy of the evangel, and its leaders bitter opponents of the Lutheran teaching." Introduction to the circular-letter. Weim. ed., 18, p. 376.

[3] Luther's own way of putting the objection, "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 399; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 331. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, *ibid.*

account of the judgment of God on Thomas Münzer, wherein God plainly gives the lie to his spirit and condemns it."[1] This writing, it is true, does not deal so directly with the peasant rising as the two previous ones, and the "circular-letter" to be treated of below; its chief object is to cite the unfortunate termination of Münzer's enterprise as a practical refutation of the prophetical office he had assumed. But, after the warning which the author addresses to "all dear Germans," not excluding the rebellious peasants, against Münzer's co-religionists, as the "noxious, false prophets," he concludes with this timely exhortation: "Of the lords and authorities I would make two requests, first that if they prove victorious they be not over-elated, but fear God, in whose sight they are very culpable, and secondly, that they be merciful to the prisoners and to those who surrender, as God is merciful to everyone who resigns himself into His hands and humbles himself."

The writing referred to on Münzer's defeat gives examples of some of the fanatical letters written by the leader of the Anabaptists. It was an easy task for Luther to expose their fanaticism and danger. The fellow's end "made it plain that God had condemned the spirit of revolt, and also the rebels themselves." With bitter mockery he puts these words into Münzer's mouth: "I, a befouled prophet, am borne along on a hurdle to the tower of Heldrungen." (Luther knew nothing as yet of Münzer's death, but only of his imprisonment in Heldrungen.) Therefore they ought to slay these "dangerous false prophets whom the judgment of God had unmasked, and return to peace and obedience." The fanatics "who teach wrongly and falsely" are not to be regarded as leaders of the people; "in future the people must beware of them, and strive to preserve body and soul through the true Word of God."

In order, however, to give an answer to all the "wiseacres, who wished to teach him how he should write,"[2] he at once composed the third work on the subject of the rising, which was now practically at an end. This is the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 367 ff.; Erl. ed., 65, p. 12 ff. The date is determined by K. Müller in the work quoted above, p. 201, n. 3, p. 144.

[2] In the sermon at Wittenberg on June 4, 1525, Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 715.

" Circular-letter on the severe booklet against the Peasants," dedicated to the Mansfeld Chancellor, Caspar Müller, one of those who had informed him of the numerous complaints made against him.

The concluding words, in which we hear the real Luther speaking, mark its purpose: " What I teach and write, remains true, though the whole world should fall to pieces over it. If people choose to take up a strange attitude towards it, then I will do the same, and we shall see who is right in the end."[1] Such words are sufficient of themselves to give an idea of the tone which he adopts in this work, in which he goes beyond anything he had already said.

At the commencement he bravely grapples with the opposition he has encountered. " ' There, there,' they boast, ' we see Luther's spirit, and that he teaches the shedding of blood without mercy; it must be the devil who speaks through him!' " Thus everybody is ready to fall on him, such is the ingratitude displayed towards the " great, and bright light of the evangel." " Who is able to gag a fool? " His accusers were " doubtless also rebels." But " a rebel does not deserve a reasonable answer, for he will not accept it; the only way to answer such foul-mouthed rascals is with the fist, till their noses dribble. The peasants would not listen to him or let him speak, therefore their ears must be opened by musket bullets so that their heads fly into the air. . . . I will not listen to any talk of mercy, but will give heed to what God's Word demands."

" Therefore my booklet is right and true though all the world should be scandalised at it."[2]

He attacks those who " advocate mercy so beautifully, now that the peasants have been defeated." " It is easy to detect you, you ugly black devil"; every robber might as well come, and, after having been " sentenced by the judge to be beheaded, cry: ' But Christ teaches that you are to be merciful.' " " This is just what the defenders of the peasants are doing " when they " sing their song of mercy "; they themselves are the " veriest bloodhounds, for they wish vice to go unpunished."[3]

" Here, as in many other places, where Luther has to defend his standpoint against attack," Köstlin says of this writing, " he draws the reins tighter instead of easing them." " Here he no longer sees fit to say even one word on behalf of the peasants, notwithstanding the real grievances which had caused the rising."[4]

At a time, when, after their victory, many of the lords, both Catholic and Lutheran, were raging with the utmost cruelty against all the vanquished, even against those who had been drawn

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 401; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 334.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 384 ff. = pp. 311–14.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 387 f. = pp. 315–16.
[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 715, 717.

into the rising through no fault of their own, at a time when the loudest exhortations to mercy would have been far more in place, he unthinkingly pours forth such passionate words as these: "If wrath prevails in the Empire then we must be resigned and endure the punishment, or humbly sue for pardon." It is true that those "who are of God's Kingdom [viz. true Christians] must show mercy towards all and pray for them," but they must not "interfere with the secular power and its work, but rather assist and further it"; "this wrath of the secular power [this at the moment entirely engrosses his thoughts] is not the least part of the Divine mercy." "What a fine sort of mercy would that be, to show pity to thieves and murderers and to allow myself to be murdered, dishonoured and robbed?" "What more naughty was ever heard of than a mad rabble and a peasant gorged with food and drink and grown powerful?"[1]

"As I wrote then, so I write now: Let no one take pity on the hardened, obstinate and blinded peasants, who will not listen: let whoever can and is able, hew down, stab and slay them as one would a mad dog." "It is plain that they are traitorous, disobedient and rebellious thieves, robbers, murderers and blasphemers, so that there is not one of them who has not deserved to suffer death ten times over without mercy." "The masters have learnt what there is behind a rebel . . . an ass must be beaten and the rabble be governed by force."[2]

The inflammatory letter proceeds to deal with the objections brought against the writer; in any case, gainsayers argued, innocent persons who had been dragged into the rising by the peasants would "suffer injustice in God's sight by being executed." Even on this point, on which previously he had spoken with more mildness, he now refuses to surrender. "First I say that no injustice is done them," for that no Christian man stayed in the ranks of the rebels; and even if such fellows had fought only under compulsion, "do you think they are thereby excused?" "Why did they allow themselves to be coerced?" They ought rather to have suffered death at the hands of the peasants than accompany them; owing to the general contempt for the evangel God ordains that even the innocent should be punished; besides, the innocent ever had to suffer in time of war. "We Germans, who are much worse than the olden Jews, and yet are not exiled and slaughtered, are the first to murmur, become impatient and seek to justify ourselves, refusing to allow even a portion of our nation to be slaughtered."[3]

He then boldly confesses his more profound theological view of the sanguinary war: "The intention of the devil was to lay Germany waste, because he was unable to prevent in any other way the spread of the evangel."[4]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 390 f.; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 319, 320.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 392–4 = 322, 324.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 394, 396; Erl. ed., 24^2, pp. 324, 327.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 397 = 328.

Some of the excuses scattered throughout the pamphlet in reply to the objections, whether of his foes, or of critics among the adherents of the new faith, are decidedly unfortunate. Offence had been given by his inciting "everyone who could and was able" against the rebels, and setting up every man as at once "judge and executioner,"[1] instead of leaving this to the authorities. Needless to say he sticks to his guns. With rhetorical vehemence, he declares that rebels "fall upon the Lord with swords drawn." Rebellion deserves neither judgment nor mercy, there is nothing for it but to slaughter without compunction."[2]

He now says he had never taught, "that mercy was not to be shown to the prisoners and those who surrendered, as I am accused of having done; my booklet proves the contrary."[3] In point of fact his "booklet," i.e. the pamphlet "Against the murderous Peasants," does not prove the "contrary."

So far he had said nothing concerning mercy towards the prisoners; this he was to do only later. In his circular-letter he protests—it is to be hoped to some purpose—"I do not wish to encourage the ferocious tyrants, or to approve their raging, for I hear that some of my young squires are behaving beyond measure cruelly to the poor people." Now, he speaks strongly, though rather late in the day, against the "ferocious, raging, senseless tyrants who even after the battle are not sated with blood," and even threatens to write a special pamphlet against such tyrants. "But such as these," so he excuses himself concerning his previous utterances, "I did not undertake to instruct," but merely "the pious Christian authorities."

His opponents, who sympathised with the lot of the vanquished, asked why he did not also admonish the authorities who were not pious. He replies that this was not part of his duty: "I say once more, for the third time, that I wrote merely for the benefit of those authorities who were disposed to act rightly and in a Christian manner."[4] Even in this letter he again incites against the peasants, everyone who can and by whatever means: he allows, as stated above, anyone to kill the rebels, openly or by stealth, nor does he retract the sentence, that "every man" who would and was able ought to act towards them as both "judge and executioner"; finally he declares that he is unable to blame the severity of such authorities as do not act in a Christian manner, i.e. "without first offering terms." In a word, he absolutely refuses to remedy the mistakes into which his passion had hurried him, but takes pleasure in still further exaggerating them in spite of the scandal caused.

"The Catholic bishops at once laid the blame of the peasant rising at the door of the 'great murderer' of Wittenberg," so writes Luther's most recent biographer,

[1] "Against the murderous Peasants," *ibid.*, p. 358=304.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 398 f.=330.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 399=331.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 399 f.=330–3.

"as having been his work.[1] The peasants themselves in many instances believed this, while Luther himself admitted a certain complicity. 'They went out from us; but they are not of us,' he says in the words of the First Epistle of St. John (ii. 19). The natural connection of ideas necessarily implied that the spirit of reform which had been let loose was not to work on the Church alone. If all that was rotten in the Church was to fall, why should so much that was rotten in the Empire remain? If all the demands of the Papacy were to be rejected, why should those of squiredom be held sacred? If Luther might treat Duke George of Saxony and King Henry VIII of England as fools and scoundrels, why should more regard be shown to the smaller fry, the petty counts and lords? If the peasant, by virtue of the common priesthood of all Christians, was capable of reforming the Church, why should he not have his say in the question of hunting-rights and the right of pasture? The kernel of the Wittenberg preaching was that all man-made ordinances were worthless, and that one thing only was to be considered, viz. the Word of God. The Pope was Antichrist, the Emperor a scarecrow, the Princes and Bishops simple dummies. How could such words of Luther fail to be seized on with avidity by the oppressed, down-trodden, and shamelessly victimised peasantry? The forces which, owing to the religious disturbances, now broke loose, would, however, have done their work even without Luther's teaching."

It was not only the "Catholic bishops," however, who accused Luther of being the instigator of the rising, but also intelligent laymen who were observing the times with a watchful eye. The jurist Ulrich Zasius, who at one time had been inclined to favour Luther, wrote in the year of the revolt to his friend Amerbach: "Luther, the destroyer of peace, the most pernicious of men, has plunged the whole of Germany into such madness, that we now consider ourselves lucky if we are not slain on the spot." He regrets the treaty made on May 24, 1525, at Freiburg im Breisgau, where he lived, on its capitulation to the rebels, in which provision was made for the "Disclosure of the Holy Evangel of godly truth and the defence of godly righteousness."

[1] Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 29.

That the "holy evangel" and "godly truth" should only now be disclosed at Freiburg, called forth his sarcasm. In the treaty, he says, "There is much that is in bad taste and ridiculous, as we might expect from peasants, for instance, their demand that the gospel be esteemed, or, as they say, 'upheld'; as though this had not been done long before by every Christian."[1]

In 1525 Cochlæus published a criticism on Luther's work "Against the murderous Peasants," where he says, "Now that the poor, unhappy peasants have lost the wager, you go over to the princes. But in the previous booklet, when there was still a good chance of their success, you wrote very differently."[2]

Erasmus, who was closely observing Luther, says to him, in view of the fighting which still continued spasmodically: "We are now reaping the fruit of your spirit. You do not acknowledge the rebels, but they acknowledge you, and it is well known that many who boast of the name of the evangel have been instigators of the horrible revolt. It is true you have attempted in your grim booklet against the peasants to allay this suspicion, but nevertheless you cannot dispel the general conviction that this mischief was caused by the books you sent forth against the monks and bishops, in favour of evangelical freedom, and against the tyrants, more especially by those written in German."[3]

It would appear that Luther himself had no difficulty whatever in forming his conscience and accepting the responsibility. On one occasion in later years, looking back upon the events of the unhappy rising, he declared, that he was completely at ease concerning the advice he had given to the authorities against the peasants, in spite of the sanguinary results. "Preachers," he says, in his usual drastic mode of expression, "are the biggest murderers about, for they admonish the authorities to fulfil their duty and to punish the wicked. I, Martin Luther, slew all the peasants in the rebellion, for I said they should be slain; all their blood is upon my head. But I cast it on our Lord

[1] "Epp. ad viros aetatis suae doctissimos," ed. Rieggerus, 1774, p. 97.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 376, quoted in the introduction to the circular letter.

[3] "Hyperaspistes," "Opp.," 1, p. 1032.

God, Who commanded me to speak in this way." His usual persuasion, viz. that he was God's instrument, here again helps him. He gives us, however, a further reason: The devil and the ungodly also slew not a few, but it is a very different matter when the authorities punish the wicked, for they are fulfilling a duty.[1]

Luther, after the appearance of these pamphlets, in various other publications asked that leniency should be shown towards the peasants who had been handled all too severely. In a private letter on behalf of the son of a citizen of Eisleben, who had been taken prisoner, we also meet with some fine recommendations in this sense.[2]

He was not, however, successful in calming the general ill-feeling aroused by his violent invective against the "murderous peasants." His former popularity and his power over the masses were gone. After 1525 he lost his close touch with the people, and was obliged more and more to seek the assistance necessary for his cause in the camp of the Princes. For this change of front he was branded as a "hypocrite," and "slave of Princes," by many of the discontented.[3] "The springtime of the reformation was over," says Hausrath. "Luther no longer passed from one triumph to another as he had during the first seven years of his career. He himself says: 'Had not the revolted peasants fouled the water for my fishing, things would look very different for the Papacy!' The hope to overthrow completely the Roman rule in Germany by means of a united, overwhelmingly powerful, popular movement had become a mere dream."[4]

The Catholic princes of North Germany chose that very time to bind themselves more closely together for self-defence against the social revolution, and to repel Lutheranism. By the league of Dessau on July 19, 1525, they followed the example set by the bishops and dukes of South Germany, who had likewise, at Ratisbon, taken common measures for self-protection. The soul of the

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 284 (Tischreden). Cp. Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 307, Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 290.
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, 714, 717 f.
[3] Cp. Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 5, p. 181, n. 1.
[4] Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 62.

league was Duke George of Saxony; Joachim of Brandenburg, Albert of Mayence and Magdeburg, and Henry and Erich of Brunswick also joined him. An account given by Duke George, at the period when the league was established, throws a clearer light upon the motives which inspired it. Written under the influence of the horrors of the previous weeks, it breathes the indignation of its author at the part which Lutheranism had played in the misfortune, and looks around for some means by which the "root of the rebellion, the damned Lutheran sect, may be extirpated; the revolt inspired by the Lutheran evangel had led to the diminution of the honour and service of God, and had been undertaken with a view to damaging the clergy, prelates and the lower orders of the aristocracy, nor could it well be completely quelled except by the rooting out of these same Lutherans."[1] Duke George at that time entertained hopes —not justified by events—of being able, by appealing to the experiences of the Peasant-War, to alienate from Luther, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, and Johann, Elector of Saxony, who had just commenced his reign.

The above-mentioned Princes, who were Catholic in their views, met together in Leipzig at Christmas, 1525, in order —as representatives of the Catholic faith, the principles of which were being endangered in Germany—to induce the Emperor to provide some remedy in accordance with the provisions of the Diet of Worms.

The prolonged absence of the Emperor Charles from Germany, due to his concern in European politics, was one of the principal causes of the growing disturbances. To recall him to Germany and invite him to interfere was the object of a measure taken by certain ecclesiastics at a meeting held at Mayence on November 14, 1525. Delegates from the twelve provinces of Mayence assembled at the instance of the Chapter of Spires. It was a remarkable fact that the bishops themselves, who by the indifference they displayed had, as a body, roused the dissatisfaction of zealous Churchmen, did not attend, but only members of the Chapters. They determined to insist upon their bishops making a stand against the revolutionary Lutheran preach-

[1] Ed. W. Friedensburg, "Zur Vorgesch. des Gotha-Torgauischen Bündnisses der Evangelischen," 1884. Cp. Kawerau in "Theolog. Literaturztng.," 1884, p. 502.

ing, to send a deputation to the Pope and the Emperor with an account of the general mischief which had befallen Germany by reason of the apostasy, and finally to urge the Emperor to return to Germany, and meanwhile to name executors for carrying out the orders he might give for the preservation of religion according to law. George of Saxony, Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and the Bavarian Dukes were to be proposed to the Emperor as such executors. The deputation from the Chapters was, however, never sent, owing apparently to the lack of interest displayed by those Chapters which assembled, and by those which were invited but did not send the necessary funds. The zealous Dean of Mayence Cathedral, Lorenz Truchsess von Pommersfelden, found himself practically left single-handed.[1]

Upon learning what resolutions had been passed, Luther wrote, in March, 1526, a tract of frightful violence against the "Mayence Proposal"; it was, however, suppressed by the Electoral Court of Saxony, owing to the intervention of Duke George.[2] The Emperor, notwithstanding his promise to arrive speedily, did not reach Germany until 1530, after having achieved great success abroad. He came with the firm intention to oppose the religious revolution with the utmost vigour, and to place the Imperial authority on a firmer footing.

Meanwhile, the Courts of Saxony and Hesse, whose sympathies were with the Lutheran party, had, however, at Gotha entered into a defensive alliance which was finally concluded at Torgau on May 2, 1526. The Emperor's threats, which had become known, did their part in bringing this about; and a further result of the Emperor's letters against the "wicked Lutheran cause and errors" was, that the Dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg, Philip of Brunswick-Grubenhagen, Henry of Mecklenburg, Wolfgang of Anhalt and Albert of Mansfeld also joined the league.

Luther was greatly rejoiced at this proof of the favour of the Princes, but, as yet, he refused to commit himself on the question as to whether force might be used against the Emperor and the Empire. (See vol. iii., xv. 3.)

[1] Cp. Fr. Herrmann, "Evangelische Regungen zu Mainz in den ersten Jahren der Reformation," in "Schriften fur Reformationsgesch.," No. 100, 1910, pp. 275–304.

[2] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 7 f. For the tract, so far as it is known, see "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 252 ff.; Erl. ed. 65, p. 22 ff.

As a consequence of the Peasant-War the Princes grew in power, while the people lost many rights and liberties which they had previously enjoyed.

"The practical outcome of the great popular movement was deplorable," writes F. G. Ward. "The condition of the common people became even worse than before, and the national feeling which had begun to arise again degenerated into particularism in the vast number of small, independent States."[1] Just as the common people ascribed their misfortunes to Luther, who, at the critical moment, had deserted the cause of the peasants, so likewise many of the nobility were angry with him because of the discontent which his teaching fostered. The confiscation of Church property by the nobility roused the hatred of many of the powerful against Luther, whose aim it was to favour the rapacity only of such as were favourable to his cause.

When, in February, 1530, Luther's father lay on his death-bed, the fear of his enemies prevented the son undertaking the journey through the flat country to see him. He accordingly wrote to him, explaining why he was unable to leave Wittenberg: "My good friends have dissuaded me from it, and I myself am forced to believe that I may not tempt God by venturing into this peril, for you know the kind of favour I may expect from lord or peasant."[2]

This dislike on the part of both the peasants and the lords, which he frequently admits, has been taken as a proof that he did his duty towards both in an impartial manner. It would, however, be more correct to say, that he failed in his duty towards both parties, first to the lords and then to the peasants, and that on both occasions his mistake was closely bound up with his public position, i.e. with his preaching of the new faith. He advocated the cause of the peasants with the intention of thereby introducing the evangel amongst the people, while he supported the lords in order to counteract the pernicious results of the socio-religious movement which resulted, and to exonerate the evangel from the charge of preaching revolt. There is, as a matter of fact, no ground for the charge of "duplicity"

[1] Frank G. Ward, "Darstellung der Ansichten Luthers vom Staat und seinen wirtschaftlichen Aufgaben," 1898, p. 31.

[2] To Hans Luther, February 15, 1530, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 130 ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 230).

brought against him by his opponents; the changing circumstances determined his varying action, and so little did he disguise his thoughts, that on both occasions his strong language increased the evil.[1]

The unfavourable feeling which prevailed towards the peasants at once influenced his views concerning the duty of the authorities. That the authorities should meet every transgression of the law on the part of the people by severe measures, appears to him more and more as one of their principal obligations.

In 1526, at the instance of a stranger, he caused one of his sermons to be printed, in which he says to the people: "Because God has given a law and knows that no one keeps it, He has also appointed lictors, drivers and overseers, for Scripture speaks thus of the authorities in a parable; like the donkey-drivers who have to lie on the neck of their beasts and whip them to make them go. In the same way the authorities must drive, beat and slay the people, Messrs. Omnes, hang, burn, behead and break them on the wheel, that they may be kept in awe." "As the swine and wild beasts have to be driven and restrained by force," so the authorities must insist upon the keeping of the laws.[2] So far does he go as to declare that the best thing that could come about would be the revival of serfdom and slavery.[3]

At a later date he frequently depicted the peasants, quite generally, as rascals, and poured forth bitter words of anger against them. "A peasant is a hog," he says in 1532, "for when a hog is slaughtered it is dead, and in the same way the peasant does not think about the next life, for otherwise he would behave very differently."[4] The following date also from the same period: "The peasant remains a boor, do what you will"; they have, so he says, their mouth,

[1] Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," 2^{18}, p. 526 n. "Luther's conduct in the Peasant War was not ambiguous, but in both his writings merely violent as usual; in the first, against the nobles, more especially the higher clergy; in the second, against the peasants."

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 276.

[3] *Ibid.*, 33, p. 390. In the "Exhortation to Peace" Luther had represented to the peasants that their demand for the abrogation of serfdom was "rapacious," "and directly contrary to the gospel." Cp. vol. v., xxxv. 5.

[4] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 118.

nose, eyes and everything else in the wrong place.[1] "I believe that the devil does not mind the peasants"; he "despises them as he does leaden pennies"; he thinks "he can easily manage to secure them for himself, as they will assuredly be claimed by no one."[2] "A peasant who is a Christian is like a wooden poker."[3] To a candidate for marriage he wrote: "My Katey sends you this friendly warning, to beware of marrying a country lass, for they are rude and proud, cannot get on well with their husbands and know neither how to cook nor to brew."[4]

"The peasants as well as the nobles throughout the country," he complains in 1533, in a letter to Spalatin, "have entered into a conspiracy against the evangel, though they make use of the liberty of the gospel in the most outrageous manner. It is not surprising that the Papists persecute us. God will be our Judge in this matter!" "Oh, the awful ingratitude of our age. We can only hope and pray for the speedy coming of our Lord and Saviour [the Last Day]."[5]

The psychological picture presented by Luther during the whole of the year 1525 reveals more plainly than at any other time his state of morbid excitement. The nervous tension which had been increasing in him ever since 1517, together with his mental anxiety and the spirit of defiance, reached their culminating point in the year of his marriage, a year filled with the most acute struggles.

"His enemies called the temper of the strong man demoniacal," says a Protestant historian of the Peasant-War, "and, as a matter of fact," he adds, "the Luther we meet with in the writings of the years 1517–1525 bears but little resemblance to the earnest, but cheerful and kindly husband and father whom Protestants are wont to picture as their reformer."[6]

This remark applies with special force to the year 1525 when he actually became a husband, though more stress

[1] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 125. Cp. Cordatus, "Tagebuch," 216. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 127. Cordatus, *ibid.*, p. 217.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 131. Cordatus, p. 221.
[4] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, undated Fragment.
[5] On August 25, 1533, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 333.
[6] P. Schreckenbach, "Luther und der Bauernkrieg," 1895, p. 45.

should be laid upon the mental strain he was undergoing. Luther undoubtedly acted at that time, not only in the matter of the Peasant-War, but also in many other complex questions, under the influence of an overwrought temper. It was a period of combined internal and external conflict, which, so to speak, raised his troubled spirit above the normal conditions of existence. With the fanatics he had to struggle for the very existence of his evangel; the contradictions and dissensions within the new fold also caused him constant anxiety. His controversy with the learned Erasmus on the subject of Free-Will angered him beyond measure, for Erasmus, as Luther says, "held the knife to his throat"[1] by his book in defence of the freedom of the human will. Luther was also at war with the "wiseacres" who disapproved of his marriage, and had to vindicate his action also to himself. In feverish delirium he fancies he sees the jaws of death gaping for him, and feels that the devil in all his strength has been let loose to seize upon his person, as the one through whom alone, as he says, truth and salvation are to be proclaimed to the world. He marries, and then exclaims with fear: "Perhaps as soon as I am dead my teaching will be overthrown; then my example may be a source of encouragement to the weak."[2] "I see the rabble as well as the nobles raging against me," but this comfort remains to me, "however hostile they may be to me on account of my marriage or other matters, yet their hostility is only a sign that I am in the right"; "were the world not scandalised at me, then I should indeed fear that what we do was not from God."[3]

The idea of his own divine mission, raising him far above the reach of his enemies, finds expression to quite a marked degree in the letters he wrote to his friends at that time. In these he is certainly not speaking of mere fancies, but of views which he was earnestly desirous of inculcating.

"God has so often trodden Satan under my feet, He has cast down the lion and the dragon beneath me, He will not allow the basilisk to harm me!" "Christ began without our counsel, and He will assuredly bring His work to its

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 776. "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 367: "*ipsum iugulum petisti.*"

[2] To Michael Stiefel, September 29, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 248 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 248: "*metuens, ne non esset divinum, quod gerimus.*"

completion even contrary to what we would advise. . . . God works above, and against, and under, and beyond all that we can conceive." "It is, however, a grief to me now that these blasphemous enemies [certain of the preachers] should have been raised to the ministry and the knowledge of the [Divine] Word through us. May God convert them and instruct them, or else provide for their removal. Amen." He writes thus to his friend Nicholas Amsdorf, the later "bishop," who, perhaps of all his friends, was the one most likely to have a real comprehension for language of this stamp.[1]

In utter contrast to the opinion Luther here expressed of himself stands the description sketched by Hieronymus Emser of his person and his work.

One of Luther's humanistic followers, Euricius Cordus, had published in 1525, in Latin verse, the so-called "Antilutheromastix" (scourge of the antilutherans), in which he heaped scorn upon those literary men who defended the Church against Luther. Emser himself was attacked in the work for his championship of the older Church. Emser, however, replied in a work, also couched in Latin hexameters and entitled "Justification of the Catholics in reply to the invective of the physician Euricius Cordus, and his Antilutheromastix."[2] Under the influence of the strong impression made upon him by Luther's marriage and the Peasant-War he has therein inserted some verses expressing his indignation against Luther; from these we quote here some extracts. The language reflects plainly Luther's personality as it appeared in the eyes of Emser and many of the Catholic controversialists of that day, and thus serves to mirror the development and progress of the intellectual struggle.[3]

"God commanded vows to be kept, but Luther tears them to pieces. Christ commended those who renounced matrimony, but Luther praises those who wantonly violate chastity. Purity is pleasing in the sight of heaven, but to this height Luther cannot raise himself. Luther at one time renounced matrimony by a sacred promise made in the presence of God, but now he

[1] May 30, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 182.

[2] In "Eurici Cordi Medici antilutheromastigos calumnias expurgatio pro catholicis," 1526. Cp. G. Kawerau, "Hieron. Emser," 1898, p. 83 f. For Emser's work I made use of the very rare copy in the University library at Munich.

[3] Verse 53 ff.

plunges into it because he, the monk, has been led astray by his passion for a nun. Whereas our Saviour lived unmarried, he, the unhappy and faithless man, desires to take a wife. Christ gave an example of humility, this man is proud and even rises in impudent rebellion against the authorities. He launches out into torrents of abuse and vituperation ("*Maledictorum plaustris iniurius*"). He heaps up mountains of insults, he burns the sacred laws and mocks at God and man in the same way as did the old tyrants of Sicily. Christ is the friend of peace, but this fellow calls to arms. He invites the raging mob to wash their hands in the blood of the clergy. He provokes and incites the masses under the screen of a false freedom so that they audaciously refuse to pay tithes, dues and taxes, and ruthlessly conspire against the life of the lords." In Emser's opinion it was Luther's word and writings which caused the conflagration. "He persuaded the people to look on him as a prophet, and to set his foolish fancies on a level with the oracles of heaven. The German people, as though stupefied with drink, rise and follow him in a terrible tumult, turning their blood-stained weapons against themselves."

The poet then directs the attention of the reader to the crowds of people massacred and the strongholds consumed by fire. "The priest, robbed of his means of livelihood and without a church, wanders to and fro; in the families grief and dissension reign; the nun who has forfeited her honour and her chastity, weeps. This, Luther, is the result of your fine writings. Whoever says that you took them from the Word of Christ and that the clear light of the gospel shines through them, must indeed have been struck with blindness. None is more fickle than Luther; nowhere does he remain true to himself; first he commits his cause to the appointed judge, then he refuses to abide by the decision or to acknowledge any jurisdiction on earth. At one time he recognises all the seven Sacraments, at another only three, and no doubt he will soon admit none at all."

This man, Emser continues, Cordus presumes to compare with Moses, the sublime, divinely appointed leader of the Israelites! This audacious comparison he is at pains to disprove by setting the qualities of the one side by side with those of the other. He says for instance: Moses sanctified the people, "but your Luther gives the reins to sinful lusts. The people, after casting off all the wholesome restrictions of the ancient laws of morality, are bereft of all discipline, of all fear either of God or the authorities; virtue disappears, law and justice totter. . . . The heart of the German race has been hardened to stone; sunk in the mire, and given over to their passions, they despise all the gifts they have received of God. The children suck in the errors of their parents with their mothers' milk and follow their example, learn to blaspheme, are proud and thankless and thus become the ruin of their country. To this has your unhappy Moses brought them." And now Luther was seeking to make further con-

quests by means of a flood of popular writings, embellished with pictures, verses and songs so as to penetrate more easily into the minds of the unwary ; with this aim in view he did not even spare the Bible, circulating false translations and explaining it by venomous glosses. " How many thousand souls have not his writings already brought to eternal perdition ! They fancied that in them they found the truth, and were miserably deceived by such doctrines." What confusion, he says, will not be occasioned in the future among those who hang upon his words, by his translation of the Bible.

" Go now, Cordus, and compare this man with Moses, the liar with the truth-loving saint, the wild stormer with the meek and patient leader of the people. Luther, desirous of leading us out of the Roman bondage, casts us into an unhappy spiritual bondage ; he drags us from light into darkness, from heaven down to hell."

What is pleasing in the long poem, apart from the smooth Latin verse, is the generous recognition which Emser bestows on the numerous other defenders of the Church, who, like himself, as he says, have withstood Luther vigorously and successfully with their pen. Among these he singles out for special mention Eck, Faber, Cochlæus, Dietenberger and others. His frank admission that much in the Church stood in need of improvement and that a real Catholic reformer would be welcome to all, is also worthy of notice. He shares the desire, which at that time was making itself so strongly felt in Catholic circles, that the Emperor, as the highest temporal authority, should now lend his assistance to the Church and give the impetus necessary towards the accomplishment of the longed-for renewal. " But though we do not defend the old abuses, yet we condemn Luther's foolish new doctrines. The rule of the earlier ages of the Church ought to shine in front of us to guide our life as well as to determine dogma. We must cling to the narrow way of the gospel and to the apostolic precepts, the decrees of the Fathers and the written and unwritten tradition as taught by the Holy Ghost who guides the Church. For the success of the reform it is certainly not necessary to overthrow the existing human and divine order of things, or to fill the weary world with noisy strife. The Emperor has it in his hands, let him only follow the example of so many of his predecessors who helped the Church to renew her youth, particularly Charles the Great and his pious son Lewis."

Luther, meanwhile, was straining every nerve in the cause of the intellectual revolution of which the plan floated in his mind. It seemed as though he were incapable of fatigue.

His numerous labours, his constant cares and the excessive mental strain are apparent from his letters. He writes of a supposed portent in the world of nature. "The omen fills me with fear, it can presage nothing but evil." "I am altogether immersed in Erasmus," he says, "I shall take care not to let anything slip, for not a single word of his is true:" he writes thus to Spalatin.[1] "Every day I am overwhelmed with complaints from our parishes," he laments to the pastor of Zwickau: "Satan is busy in our midst. The people absolutely refuse to pay anything towards the support of the preachers." He intends, he says, to persuade the Elector to organise a visitation of all the churches throughout the land, he is also anxious to introduce uniformity in matters of ritual; all this involves him in a hundred difficulties.[2] Disagreements with the Zwinglians of Strasburg cause some trouble. At the same time the negotiations with the Teutonic Order call for his whole care and attention, the apostasy and marriage of Albert, the Grand Master, greatly raising his hopes.

It was in this frame of mind, and in the midst of all this manifold business, that Luther threw himself into the controversy on man's free-will. It was his object to establish a literary foundation for his new doctrines as a whole by vindicating a pet doctrine on account of which he had been so mercilessly attacked.[3]

3. The Religion of the Enslaved Will. The Controversy between Luther and Erasmus (1524–1525)

That the will is free is one of the most indisputable facts of our inner consciousness. Where there is reason there must needs be a corresponding freedom, i.e. freedom from interior necessity.

Freedom is the basis of all worship of God, and if external compulsion is rightly excluded from the idea of religion,

[1] September 28, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 246.
[2] On September 27, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 245.
[3] Cp. letter of May 26, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 304 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 179).

surely still more opposed to it is the assumption that the will lacks freedom when it seeks and serves God. The true dignity of the soul's worship of God consists in the voluntary payment of homage to the highest of all beings in the natural as well as the supernatural order. "God has made you without your co-operation," says Augustine, "but He will not save you without it."[1] God's greatness and omnipotence are enhanced by His creation of beings gifted with the power of self-determination, who can will or not, who are free to choose this or that and are in a position to embrace what is good instead of what is evil.

The consensus of the human race as a whole in the belief in free-will finds its expression in the acknowledgment of the sense of duty. Virtue and vice, command and prohibition are written on every page of history since the world began. If however there is such a thing as a moral order, then free-will must exist. The misuse of the latter is followed, owing to the spontaneous protest on the part of nature, by a feeling of guilt and remorse, whence Augustine, the champion of grace and free-will, could say: "The feeling of remorse is a witness both to the fact that the individual who feels it has acted wrongly and that he might have acted aright."[2]

The doctrine of the Church before Luther's time was, that free-will had not been destroyed by original sin, and that, in one who acts aright, it is not interfered with by God's grace. The fall of our first parents did not obliterate but merely weakened and warped the freedom of moral choice by giving rise to concupiscence and the movements of passion. Among the many proofs of this appealed to in Holy Scripture were the words spoken by God to Cain: "Why art thou angry? . . . If thou do well, shalt thou not receive? but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door? but the lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it."[3] It was well known that Scripture always credited even the fallen will with power over the lower impulses, as well as with the choice between good and evil, life and death, the service of God and the service of idols.

Seeing that Luther, in teaching the contrary, appealed to the power of divine grace which ostensibly does all, obliterating every free deed, it is worth our while to point out the scriptural proofs by which the Church vindicated man's liberty even under the action of grace.

Ecclesiastical writers, even in the days immediately before Luther's time, were fond of laying stress on the words of the

[1] "*Qui te fecit sine te, non iustificat te sine te*," "Serm.," 160, n. 13.
[2] "*De duabus animabus*," 14, n. 22.
[3] Genesis iv. 6 f. According to the Vulgate.

Apostle of the Gentiles: "We exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain"; or, again, on that other passage where he says of himself: "His grace in me was not void, but I laboured more than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God in me." It was because he was conscious of freedom and of the power of abusing grace that the Apostle exhorted the Philippians as follows: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling."[1] Catholic writers likewise pointed out that the same inspired teaching concerning the liberty of choice in those called to the state of grace was also to be found in the Old Testament: "Choose therefore life that thou mayst love the Lord thy God," an exhortation prefaced by the most solemn assurance: "I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing."[2]

True Catholic mysticism also laid great stress on free-will, and if some mystical writers, led astray by semi-pantheistic or quietistic ideas, erred from the right path, at any rate their views were never sanctioned by the Church. Some mystics also were not rightly understood and the denial of free-will was attributed to them, whereas all there is to censure in them is their vague mode of expression. This is the case with the "Theologia Deutsch," which Luther esteemed so highly but did not rightly comprehend. What the Frankfurt knight of the Teutonic Order says in this work, viz.: "When a man is in the state of grace and agreeable to God, he wills and yet it is not he who wills, but God, and there the will is not its own," may sound equivocal, though it really is perfectly harmless, for the words which follow show that he does not deny man's will, and that when he says that God Himself wills in man he is merely emphasising the harmony between the human and the Divine will: "And there nothing else is willed but what God wills, for there God wills and not man, the will being united to the Eternal Will."[3] The will which thus acts in union with the Eternal Will is the free-will of man on earth.

If Luther, instead of endeavouring to find support for his opinions on such misunderstood passages, had examined with an open mind the teaching of the Church as expressed by Augustine, the greatest teacher on grace, he would have found, that Augustine holds fast to the liberty of the will notwithstanding that in his defence of grace he had to lay greater stress on the latter than on free-will. This Doctor of the Church brilliantly refutes the assertion of the Pelagians, that the Catholic doctrine did not allow to free-will its full rights. "We also, teach freedom of choice ('*liberum in hominibus esse arbitrium*')," he says, for instance. "On this point at least there is no difference between us and you. It is not on account of this doctrine that you are Pelagians, but because you exclude from free-will the co-operation of grace in the performance of good works."[4]

[1] 2 Corinthians vi. 1; 1 Corinthians xv. 10; Philippians ii. 12.
[2] Deuteronomy xxx. 19. [3] Ed. F. Pfeiffer², 1855, p. 208.
[4] "De nuptiis et concup.," 2, c. 8.

The Catholic doctrine represented all good-doing on man's part—by which he rendered himself pleasing to God, attained to the state of justification and the right to an eternal reward—as an act organically one, effected equally by God's Grace and by man's free co-operation. Even in the preparation for the state of grace both elements were held to be essential, actual grace, and human effort supported and carried on by such grace. Concerning such preparation, theology taught that man thereby made himself in some way worthy of justification and of heaven, that he merited both, though not indeed in the strict sense, rather that, so to speak, he rendered himself deserving of justification as an unmerited reward, bestowed through the bountiful goodness of God (i.e. not "*de condigno*" but "*de congruo*"). Further examination of the scholastic teaching on this point would here be out of place, nor can we discuss the principle to which the Church ever adhered so firmly, viz. that God gives His grace to all without exception, because He wills to make all without exception eternally happy, according to the assurance of Holy Scripture: "God wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." But as regards man's free-will or want of free-will under the action of grace, which is the background of the present phase of Luther's history, according to the Church and her Doctors man's freedom of choice, far from being deranged by the action of God's grace, is, on the contrary, thereby assisted to arrive at a wholesome and unfettered decision. "Free-will," says Augustine, in his striking and thoughtful way, "is not destroyed because it is assisted by grace; it is assisted because it has not been destroyed."[1]

The position which Luther had assumed in the Commentary on Romans in 1515–1516 concerning the doctrine of human free-will has already been discussed in detail (vol. i., p. 202 ff.). It is of the utmost importance to follow up his other statements on free-will dating from that period, and the subsequent advance in his views during his public struggle till the publication of the decisive book "*De servo arbitrio*" in 1525. It not only affords a deep, psychological and theological insight into his train of thought, but also shows how his denial of free-will was the central point of his whole teaching. At the same time we shall notice certain emphatic statements which he makes, but which do not usually occupy a due place in descriptions of his theology

[1] "Epp.," 157, c. 2. It is notorious that in his controversial writings against the Pelagians, Augustine, in his later years, came to insist more and more upon grace, yet he never denied free-will nor its consequences, viz. merit and guilt. Some of Luther's misrepresentations of the statements of this Father of the Church will be given later.

and which accordingly might easily be regarded by our readers as not his at all, were they not attested conscientiously and in detail by Luther's own writings. We refer to such assertions as the following: "Everything happens of necessity"; "Man, when he does what is evil, is not master of himself"; "Man does evil because God ceases to work in him"; "By virtue of His nature God's ineluctable concursus determines everything, even the most trivial," hence "inevitable necessity" compels us in "all that we do and everything that happens," "God alone moves and impels all that He has made" ("*movet agit, rapit*"), nay, "He decrees all things in advance by His infallible will," including the inevitable damnation of those who are damned.—We shall hear these views expounded below by Luther himself as the core and kernel of his teaching ("*summa causæ*"); with spirit and energy he advocates them through some hundred pages in one of his principal works, against the greatest of the Humanists, who had dared to attack him; to question his fundamental dogma was, says Luther, to "place the knife at his throat."

The Development of Luther's Opposition to Free-Will from 1516 *to* 1524

What Luther advanced in his Commentary on Romans, against man's power of choice for what is good, has been summed up as follows by Johann Ficker, the editor of the Commentary: Luther allowed nothing to deter him from following up his new theories, nor did he even shrink from setting up the proposition of "the absolute impossibility of any good in the natural sphere," or from "stating in the strongest terms of determinism the exclusive power and action of the salutary and unconditional Divine Will."[1]

In his sermon on the Feast of St. Stephen, in 1515, Luther had spoken of the inward voice in man ("*synteresis*"), which urges him towards what is good and to true happiness, thereby implying the admission of free-will in man. This, he says, is capable of accepting or refusing God's grace, though he is careful to add that the remnant of vital force represented by the synteresis does not indicate a

[1] J. Ficker, in the Preface, p. lxxv, referring to "Schol. Rom.," 38, 42, 71, 90, 91, 93, 101; cp. 171, 179, 188, 218.

condition of health nor afford any cause for boasting in God's sight, the whole state of man being one of corruption; the synteresis, in fact, constitutes a danger to us because it leads us to trust in our own powers ("*voluntas, sapientia*"), so that we are readily induced to regard our restoration by grace as unnecessary. Such confidence in his own powers leads man to place himself on the side of those who crucified Christ, for such a one has a wrong opinion of righteousness and looks on Christ as superfluous, who is the source of righteousness. "Thus it comes about," he cries, "that grace is most strongly opposed by those who boast most of it"; a paradoxical saying which often occurs in Luther's early sermons and which plainly owes its origin to his quarrel with the "Little Saints."[1]

Not here alone, but frequently in the sermons of those days, we hear Luther warning the people against misusing the synteresis. His opposition to man's natural powers leads him at times so far that he represents the synteresis merely as a vague and practically worthless faculty. It is true he declares that he simply wishes to obviate an irreligious over-esteem of free-will, but he really goes further, now admitting, now rejecting it; his explanations let us see that "here there is an unsolved contradiction in his theology. He fails to explain how the remnant of vital force still in us is to be made use of by Divine grace so as to produce health," and how "it can be of any importance or worth for the attainment of salvation in the domain of reason and will." "Is there, then, no right use for the synteresis? Luther not only tells us nothing of this, but the natural consequence of much that he says is an answer to the question in the negative, although it should undoubtedly have been answered in the affirmative."[2]

If we cast a glance at the other sermons which coincide in point of time with his Commentary on Romans, we shall find in certain remarks on the regeneration of man a foretaste of his later teaching regarding free-will. He says, for instance, of the attainment of the state of grace, that here regeneration takes place not only "without our seeking, praying, knocking, simply by the mercy of God," but also

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 30 ff. "Opp. Lat. var.," 1, p. 55 f.

[2] A. Taube, "Luthers Lehre über die Freiheit . . . bis zum Jahre 1525," Göttingen, 1901, p. 10 f.

that it resembles natural generation, where the child does nothing ("*ipso nihil agente*"); no man can be born for heaven by his own operation and merits ("*sua opera suoque merito*"). He contrasts those who are generated of God "in the spirit" with those who live after the flesh, and who often "make a great show of spirituality": they are, he says, "carnal-spiritual" and, "with their horrid, hypocritical spirituality, are doomed to destruction."[1]

According to these sermons it is plain that God is the only worker in the man who is thus born of God. In him free-will for doing what is good does not come into account, for the good works of the righteous man are God's works, and his virtues and excellence are really God's. "He works all in all, all is His, He, the One Almighty Being, does all things," so we read in Luther's sermon on August 15, 1516, the Feast of the Assumption, i.e. at a time when by his study of the Epistle to the Romans he had been confirmed in his bias against man's natural powers.[2]

The Wittenberg Disputation in 1516, "On man's powers and will without grace," immediately followed his lectures on the Epistle to the Romans; here we find it stated in plain words, that "man's will without grace is not free, but captive, though not unwillingly."[3] To complete what has already been said (vol. i., p. 310 ff.) we may add that the proof of this is sought in that the will sins in everything, and that, according to Scripture, "Whoever sins is the slave of sin." We learn also from the Bible, we read, that we are then truly free when the Son (of God) makes us free. The natural man without grace is an evil tree, as such he can only desire and do what is evil. This degradation of the human will was intended to form the basis for a new appreciation of the grace and merits of Christ.

It is probable that the three fragments, "On the unfreedom of the human will," etc., which are in agreement with this last Disputation, date from the late autumn of 1516. Here "the captivity and slavery of the will" ("*voluntas necessario serva et captiva*") with regard to the doing of what is good, i.e. "to merit and demerit," is again emphasised. Freedom in respect of "those other, lower matters which come under the dominion

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 10 ff. "Opp. Lat. var.," 1, p. 29 f.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 78=p. 177. Cp. F. Kattenbusch, "Luthers Lehre vom unfreien Willen," Göttingen, 1875, p. 51 (the 2nd edition is a mere reprint).

[3] Cp. for this and for the other theses Luther's works mentioned in volume i., p. 310 ff., and also "Die ältesten Disputationen," etc., ed. Stange, for instance, p. 5: "*Voluntas hominis sine gratia non est libera, sed servit, licet non invita.*"

of the will" is indeed conceded.[1] But as the modern Protestant editor of the texts in question remarks, "even this freedom is merely apparent,"[2] for Luther says briefly but meaningly: "I do not deny that the will is free, or rather *seems to itself* to be free ('*imo videatur sibi libera*')[3] by the freedom of contrariety and of contradiction with regard to its lower objects." Here we already have a clear indication of the determinism which Luther was to advocate at a later date, according to which God's Omnipotence works all things in man, even indifferent matters.[4] In these fragments it is, however, chiefly a question of moral actions. Where it is a question of acts having some moral value Luther's answer is already quite definite: "The will when confronted with temptation cannot without grace avoid falling; by its own powers it is able to will only what is evil."[5]

A year later the "Disputation against the theology of the Schoolmen" of September 4, 1517, which has been already described generally (vol. i., p. 312), laid the axe at the root of free-will in respect of what is good; its tenor is even more decided, and it greatly exaggerates the corruption of man by original sin: "It is false that the will is free to choose between a thing and its contrary [in the moral order]; without grace the human will must of necessity do what is opposed to the will of God." Hence nature "must be put to death absolutely."[6]

Concerning the Heidelberg Disputation in April, 1518, we need only recall the fact, that Luther caused the thesis to be defended, that, after the Fall, free-will is but a name, and that when man does the best he can, he simply commits a mortal sin. The doctrine of the sinfulness of the works performed by the natural man, which he had held even previously, he now supplements by an addition, in the nature of a challenge: "*Liberum arbitrium post peccatum res est de solo titulo.*"[7]

In the Disputation with Eck at Leipzig in the following year, owing to his views on the subject not yet being generally known, they were not directly discussed.

When, however, after its termination, Luther, in August,

[1] Stange, *ibid.*, p. 15.

[2] Stange, *ibid.*, p. 16, n. 1, referring to his work, "Die reformatorische Lehre von der Freiheit des Handelns," in "Neue kirchl. Zeitschr.," 3, 1903, p. 214 ff.

[3] Cp. Kattenbusch, "Luthers Lehre vom unfreien Willen," p. 48 f.

[4] On Luther's Determinism, see below. For the deterministic passages in the work, "De servo arbitrio," 1525, cf. Taube, "Luthers Lehre über die Freiheit," p. 21.

[5] Latin text in Stange, *ibid.*, p. 18. Cp. Kattenbusch. *ibid.*, p. 41 ff., for what Luther said in 1516.

[6] See Stange, *ibid.*, p. 35 ff.

[7] Thesis 13, in Stange, *ibid.*, p. 53. "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 354; "Opp. Lat. var.," 1, p. 388. Cp. Thesis 14: "*Liberum arbitrium post peccatum potest in bonum potentia subiectiva, in malum vero activa semper.*" On the Heidelberg Disputation, see volume i, p. 315 ff.

1519, published the Latin "Resolutions" on the Leipzig Disputation, he proclaimed himself to the world as a most determined opponent of free-will, not even confining himself to attacking the power for doing what is good.

"Free-will," he says here, "is purely passive in every one of its acts ('*in omni actu suo*') which can come under the term of will. . . . A good act comes wholly and entirely ('*totus et totaliter*') from God, because the whole activity of the will consists in the Divine action which extends to the members and powers of both body and soul, no other activity existing."[1] In another passage of the "Resolutions" he says: "At whatever hour of our life we may find ourselves we are the slaves either of concupiscence or of charity, for both govern free-will ('*utraque enim dominabitur libero arbitrio*')."[2] Julius Köstlin is right when he sees in such words the complete renunciation of free-will. "Of man's free-will in the ordinary sense of the term, or of any independent choice for good or for evil which should include the possibility of a different decision, there is, according to Luther, no question." Köstlin points out that Luther does not here go into the question as to whether the sinfulness and corruption of the lost are to be attributed to God, Who did not cause His saving grace to be sufficiently efficacious in them.[3] Luther certainly contrived to avoid this dangerous objection, not only here, but also for long after when speaking on the subject of the will.

In the "Resolutions" Luther had merely represented his opposition to free-will as the consequence of his doctrine of the corruption of human nature due to original sin, but subsequent to the appearance of the Bull of Excommunication he goes further and declares the denial of the "*liberum arbitrium*" to be nothing less than the fundamental article of his teaching ("*articulus omnium optimus et rerum nostrarum summa*").[4] Among the propositions condemned by the Papal Bull was Luther's thesis directed against free-will at the Heidelberg Disputation. It was given in Luther's own words, viz. that free-will is a mere empty name, etc.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 421; "Opp. Lat var.," 3, p. 272.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 424=p. 276.
[3] Jul. Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 1^2, Stuttgart, 1901, p. 218.
[4] In the "Assertio omnium articulorum," "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 148; "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 234. Cp. *ibid.*, p. 146=p. 231: "*Patimur omnes et omnia: cessat liberum arbitrium erga Deum.*"

In defence of the condemned propositions Luther wrote, in 1520, the "*Assertio omnium articulorum*," which was published in 1521. To prove his denial of free-will it is usual to quote his "*De servo arbitrio*," but the "*Assertio*" already contains in substance all the strictures embodied in his later attacks.

After dealing with other subjects, he there declares that, as for the question of free-will, he had expressed himself far too feebly when speaking of the semblance of freedom; the term "*liberum arbitrium*" was a device of the devil; hence he withdraws his previous statement which erred on the side of weakness; he ought to have said that free-will was a lie, an invention ("*figmentum in rebus*"). "No one has the power even to think anything evil or good, but everything takes place agreeably with stern necessity ('*omnia de necessitate absolute eveniunt*'), as Wiclif rightly taught, though his proposition was condemned by the Council of Constance."[1]

Luther now appeals to the belief in fate with which the heathen were already acquainted. He also appeals to the Gospel which surely gives him reason, for does not Christ say (Matt. x.): "Not a sparrow shall fall to the ground without your Father in Heaven," and "the very hairs of your head are all numbered"? And in Isaias xli. does not God mockingly challenge the people: "Do ye also good and evil if you can"? The Pope and the defenders of the Bull, with their doctrine of free-will, he looks upon as prophets of Baal and he calls to them ironically: "Cheer up and be men; do what you can, attempt what is possible, and prepare yourselves for grace by your own free-will. It is a great disgrace that you are unable to produce anything from experience in support of your teaching."

"The experience of all," he says boldly, "testifies to the contrary"; God has our life in His hands, and how much more all our actions, even the most insignificant. It is Pelagian to say that free-will is able, by means of earnest effort ("*si studiose laboret*"), to do anything good; it is Pelagian to think that the will can prepare itself for grace; Pelagian too, is the principle handed down in the schools, that God gives His grace to the man who does what he can. For if we do what we can, we perform the works of the flesh! "Do we not know the works which are of the flesh? St. Paul specifies them, Galatians v.: Fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, envies, murders, etc. This is what free-will works, i.e. what is of its nature, viz. works of death; for in Romans viii. we read: 'The wisdom of the flesh is death and an enemy to God.' How can we then speak of prepara-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 146 = p. 230. This passage was toned down, after Luther's death, in the Wittenberg ed. (1546) and Jena ed. (1557); Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 2^2, p. 316 n.

tion for grace by enmity with God, of preparation for life by death ? "[1]

In these somewhat disorderly effusions of his pen he repeatedly harks back to the Bible, strangely forcing his texts. Paul denies free-will, saying in Ephesians i. : " God works all in all," thus confirming the fact " that man, even when he does and thinks what is wrong, is not responsible."[2] " God even works what is evil in the impious,"[3] as is written in Proverbs xvi. : " The Lord hath made all things for Himself, the wicked also for the evil day," and in Romans i., of the heathen : " God delivered them up to a reprobate sense to do those things which are not convenient."

Room is also found for philosophical arguments : God as the highest Being cannot permit Himself to be influenced by man's changeableness, in the way that free-will would involve ; on the contrary, He must, by virtue of His nature, determine everything Himself, down to the very smallest matters ; nor does He do so merely by the " *influentia generalis* " (" *concursus divinus generalis* "), which, according to the " chatterboxes," alone assists our free-will ; free-will must perish (" *perit* ") in order to make room for a strict and compelling influence. This applies to our pardon, for we cannot elicit or snatch this from God by our own efforts, as though we surprised Him in slumber. " *O furor, furorum omnium novissimus !* " he exclaims of the Papal Bull in the midst of this philosophical and theological digression : " All is of necessity, for we—every man and every creature—live and act not as we will, but as God wills. In God's presence the will ceases to exist."[4]

It is not surprising that Augustine also is made to bear witness in his favour.

This Doctor of the Church, though in many passages he declares himself emphatically in favour of free-will, nevertheless frequently in his works against the Pelagians asserts (perhaps too strongly were we to consider his words apart from that heated controversy) that, without grace, and left to itself, free-will cannot as a rule avoid sin ; on such occasions he does not always express the firm conviction he also holds, viz. that the will nevertheless of its own strength is able to do what is naturally good. In one passage, he says for instance, apparently quite generally : " Free-will in its captive state has strength only to sin ; for righteousness it has none until it has been set free by God, and then only with His help."[5] And elsewhere again :

[1] " Werke," *ibid.*, p. 143 ff. = p. 227 ff. It is strange but characteristic how he appeals to experience as against the doctrine of free-will : everyone possessed arguments against it " *ex vita propria. . . . Secus rem se habere monstrat experientia omnium* " (p. 145 = p. 230). His views of concupiscence come in here.

[2] " *Non est homo in manu sua, etiam mala operans et cogitans* " (*ibid.*, p. 145 = p. 230).

[3] " *Nam et mala opera in impiis Deus operatur* " (*ibid.*).

[4] " *Assertio,*" etc. " Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 145 ff. ; " Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 231 f.

[5] " Contra duas epp. Pelag.," l. 3, c. 8.

"Free-will can do nothing but sin, when the path of truth is hidden."[1] This latter assertion Luther places as a trump card at the head of the discussion of his thirty-sixth condemned proposition, though he alters the wording.[2] As a matter of fact it is not difficult to prove, as we shall do below, that Luther was quite wrong in appealing to the Doctor of Hippo in support of his own teaching.

Of more importance for the present account is the significant position which Luther assigns to his supposed rediscovery of the doctrine of the captive will. He is full of enthusiasm for the idea of a religion of the enslaved will. This new religion of the enslaved will appears to him in the light of a "theology of the cross," which, in return for his renunciation of free-will, descends upon man in order to point out to him the true road to God. "For what honour remains to God were we able to accomplish so much?" "The world has allowed itself to be seduced by the flattering doctrine of free-will which is pleasing to nature."[3] If any point of his teaching, then certainly that of the captive will is to be accounted one of the "most sublime mysteries of our faith and religion, which only the godless know not, but to which the true Christian holds fast."[4]

It fills one with grief and tears, he says, to see how the Pope and his followers—poor creatures—in their frivolity and madness, fail to recognise this truth. All the other Popish articles are endurable in comparison with this vital point, the Papacy, Councils, Indulgences and all the other unnecessary tomfoolery.[5] Not one jot do they understand concerning the will. Sooner shall the heavens fall than their eyes be opened to this basic truth. Christ, it is true, has nought to do with Belial, or darkness with light. The Popish Church knows only how to teach and to sell good works, its worldly pomp does not agree with our theology of the cross, which condemns all that the Pope approves, and produces martyrs. . . . That Church, given up to riches, luxury and worldliness, is determined to rule. But it rules without the cross, and that is the strongest proof by which I overcome it. . . . Without the cross, without suffering, the faithful city is become a harlot, and the true kingdom of Antichrist incarnate.[6]

He concludes, congratulating himself upon his having given Holy Scripture its rights.

Scripture is "full" of the doctrine on grace described above, but for at least three hundred years no writer has taken pity

[1] "De spiritu et litt.," c. 3, n. 5.

[2] In place of "*Neque liberum arbitrium quidquid nisi ad peccandum valet, si lateat veritatis via,*" he makes Augustine say: "*Liberum arbitrium sine gratia non valet nisi ad peccandum.*" Of the subject itself sufficient explanation will be found in Catholic handbooks. Cp., for instance, Hurter, "Theolog. specialis," pars. 2^{11}, 1903, p. 55 f.

[3] "Assertio," etc. "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 146: "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 233.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 95=158.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 148=234.

[6] *Ibid.*

upon grace and written in its defence, on the contrary all have written against it. "Minds have now become so dulled by their habitual delusion that I see no one who is able to oppose us on the ground of Holy Scripture. We need an Esdras to bring forth the Bible again, for [the Popish] Nabuchodonosor has trampled it under foot to such an extent that no trace of even one syllable remains."[1] He is grateful for the cheering "revival of the study of Greek and Hebrew throughout the world," and is glad to think that he has turned this to good account in his biblical labours. With this consolation he writes his final "Amen" at the end of this curious document on the religion of the captive will.

Since Luther in the above "*Assertio*" against the Bull of condemnation sets up Scripture as the sole foundation of theology—he could not well do otherwise, seeing that he had rejected all external ecclesiastical authority—we might have anticipated that, in the application of his newly proclaimed principle of the Bible only, he would have taken pains to demonstrate its advantages in this work on free-will by the exercise of some caution in his exegesis. It is true that he declares, when defending the theory of the Bible only: "Whoever seeks primarily and solely the teaching of God's Word, upon him the spirit of God will come down and expel our spirit so that we shall arrive at theological truth without fail." "I will not expound the Scripture by my own spirit, or by the spirit of any man, but will interpret it merely by itself and according to its own spirit."[2] And again: It often happens that circumstances and a mysterious, incomprehensible impulse will give to one man a right understanding such as is hidden from the industry of others.[3] Yet when, on the basis of the Bible only, he attempts to "overthrow his papistical opponents at the first onslaught,"[4] he brings forward texts which no one, not even Luther's best friend, could regard as having any bearing on the subject.

He quotes, for instance, the passage where the believer is likened to the branch of the vine which must remain engrafted on Christ the true vine, in order to escape the fire of hell, and finds therein a proof of his own view, that grace completely evacuates the will, a proof so strong that he

[1] Weim. ed., 5, p. 149=p. 235.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 97 f.=p. 161 f. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 100=p. 165.
[4] "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 96=p. 158.

exclaims: "You speak with the voice of a harlot, O most holy Vicar of Christ, in thus contradicting your Master who speaks of the vine."[1] Another example. In Proverbs xvi. it is written: "It is the part of man to prepare the soul and of the Lord to govern the tongue," hence man, reasons Luther, who cannot even control his tongue, has no free-will to do what is good.[2] There too we read: "The heart of man disposeth his way, but the Lord must direct his steps," and further on: "As the divisions of water, the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, whithersoever He will He shall turn it." After adducing these texts, which merely emphasise the general Providence of God, Luther thinks he is justified in demanding: "Where then is free-will? It is a pure creation of fancy."[3]

The saying of the clay and the potter (Isa. lxiv. 8) which manifestly alludes to the Creation and expresses man's consequent state of dependence, he refers without more ado, both here and also later, to a continuous, purely passive relationship to God which entirely excludes free-will.[4] When Christ says (Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34) that He wished to gather the children of Jerusalem like a hen under His wings, but that they would not (*καὶ οὐκ ἠθελήσατε*), Luther takes this as meaning: They *could* not; they did not wish to, simply because they did not possess that free-will which his foes believe in. It might however be said, he thinks, that Christ only "spoke there in human fashion" of the willingness of Jerusalem, i.e. "merely according to man's mode of speech," just as Scripture, for the sake of the simple, frequently speaks of God as though He were a man.[5] It is plain from his explanation that Luther, as an eminent Protestant and theologian says, "was seeking to escape from the testimony to the Divine Will that all men be saved."[6]

The best text against the hated free-will appeared to him

[1] "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 142 f.=p. 226. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 145=p. 229.

[3] Cp. *ibid.*, p. 145=p. 230: "*Unde non est dubium, satana magistro in ecclesiam venisse hoc nomen liberum arbitrium, ad seducendos homines a via Dei in vias suas proprias.*"

[4] Cp. "Opp. Lat. exeg.," 1, p. 106. Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 2^2, p. 70.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 235. "Kirchenpostille," Sermon of 1521. Cp. Köstlin, *ibid.*, 1^2, p. 365.

[6] See Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 366. He admits (2^2, p. 82) that Luther "expressly denies free-will" to those who "would not."

to be Ephesians ii. 3, where St. Paul deals with original sin and its ethical consequences. "We were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." "There is not," so he assures his readers, a "clearer, more concise and striking testimony in the Bible against free-will"; "for if all by reason of their nature are children of wrath, then free-will is also a child of wrath,"[1] etc.

He handled Scripture as an executioner would handle a criminal. All unconsciously he was ever doing violence to the words of the Bible. We naturally wonder whether in the whole history of exegesis such twisting of the sense of the Bible had ever before been perpetrated. Yet we find these interpretations in the very pages where Luther first exposed his programme of the Bible only, and declared that he at least would expound the Word of God according to its own sense, according to the "Spirit of God," and setting aside all personal prejudice. The old interpretation, on the other hand, which was to be found in the book of Lyra, with which Luther was acquainted, gave the correct meaning retained among scholars to our own day, not merely of the texts already quoted, but of many other striking passages alleged by Luther then or afterwards against free-will.

Luther proceeds rather more cautiously in the German edition of the "*Assertio*," which speedily followed the Latin.

It deals with the denial of free-will at considerably less length. Perhaps, as was often the case with him, after he had recovered from the first excitement caused by the condemnation of the articles, he may have been sobered, or perhaps he was reluctant to let loose all the glaring and disquieting theses of the "*Assertio*" in the wide circle of his German readers, whom they might have startled and whose fidelity to his cause was at that time, after the sentence of outlawry, such a vital matter to him. In later editions of the Latin text some of his sayings were softened even during his lifetime so as to avoid giving offence.

Luther had been careful in the "*Assertio*," just as he had been in his previous treatment of the subject, not to take into consideration the consequences involved by his denial of free-will; that, for instance, it follows that it is not man

[1] Weim. ed., 7, p. 147; "Opp. Lat. var.," 5, p. 232.

who actually does what is evil, but rather God who works in him, and that many were condemned merely on account of the necessity of sinning imposed upon them by God. Of this he has as yet nothing to say, though he was, shortly after, to make an attempt to obviate the difficulties.

In his translation of the Bible, in 1522, he had to render the passage of the First Epistle to Timothy (ii. 4): "God will have all men to be saved (*σωθῆναι*, '*salvos fieri*') and to come to the knowledge of the truth." This he translated: "God wills that all be assisted." He sought to escape the doctrine of the Divine Will for the salvation of all men, by attributing to the principal word a "comprehensive and somewhat indefinite sense," for that "all be assisted" may only mean, that all are to be preached to, prayed for, or assisted by fraternal charity.[1]

In a letter written at that time he even declares, that the Apostle says nothing more than that "it was God's will that we should pray for all classes, preach the truth and be helpful to everyone, both bodily and spiritually"; that it did not follow from this that God called all men to salvation.[2] "And even though many other passages should be brought forward, yet all must be understood in this sense, otherwise the Divine Providence [i.e. prevision, predestination] and election from all eternity would mean nothing at all, whereas St. Paul insists very strongly upon this."[3] Thus his own interpretation of Paul, the wholly subjective interpretation which he thought he had received through an interior revelation, was to govern the Bible as a rule admitting of no exception; it was, for instance, to elucidate for him the Epistles of Peter. In a sermon delivered about February, 1523, on the Second Epistle of Peter, he says of the passage: "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance," that this was "one of the verses which might well lead a man to believe this epistle was not written by St. Peter at all," at any rate, the author here "fell short of the apostolic spirit."[4] At the back of this opinion

[1] Köstlin, *ibid.*, 1², p. 366.

[2] To Hans von Rechenberg, August 18, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 22, p. 33 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 444). This letter to the promoter of Lutheranism at Freistadt in Silesia, was at once spread abroad in print and is included amongst Luther's catechetical works. Later he finds in the same passage, viz. Timothy ii. 4, merely an expression of God's desire that we should render our neighbours "all temporal and spiritual assistance" ("Werke," Erl. ed., 51, p. 316 ff.). In support of this he appeals to Psalm xxxvi.: "Men and beasts Thou wilt preserve, O Lord." To find in Scripture that salvation was open to all men whose free-will was ready to accept it, was "to pluck out some words of Scripture and fashion them according to our own fancy" (p. 317).

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 51, p. 317.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 14, p. 73: Erl. ed., 52, p. 271; cp. *ibid.*, p. 69=p. 267.

lay Luther's attachment to his pet doctrine and method of interpretation.

Luther's efforts to get rid of the plain texts on the salvation which is offered to all without exception arose, accordingly, from his strong aversion to free-will, and also from a certain fear of man's co-operation by means of works (even performed under grace), which would result from free-will and lead to salvation. He admits this plainly enough where he expounds 1 Timothy ii. 4: "This saying of St. Paul, the Papists assert, confirms free-will; for since he says, that 'God wills that every man be assisted' [rather, that every man be saved], it no longer depends upon Him, but upon us, whether we comply with His Will or not. This is how they come to use these words as an objection against us."[1]

For the time being he had but little to say of predestination, though he had by no means given up the idea of absolute predestination, even to hell, which he had advocated in the Commentary on Romans. (See vol. i., p. 187 ff., 237 ff.). He probably had reasons of his own for being more reticent in his public utterances on this subject. It is only later, when treating of the revealed and the hidden God, that he again lays stress on his doctrine of predestination.

When Melanchthon published his "*Loci communes rerum theologicarum*," in December, 1521, in this work, which was the technical exposition of Lutheranism at that time, he gave clear expression to the denial of free-will. "All that happens," he says there, "happens of necessity ('*necessario eveniunt*') in accordance with the Divine predestination; there is no such thing as freedom of the will."[2] Luther praised this work as an "*invictus libellus*," worthy, not only of immortality, but of taking its place in the canon of the Bible.[3] It was only later that Melanchthon came to a more correct view, making no secret of his rejection of Luther's determinism.

It is of interest to note how Luther, in his practical writings and exhortations, passes over his denial of free-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 51, p. 317.

[2] "Corpus ref.," 21, p. 87 f. Later we read: "*Fateor in externo rerum delectu esse quandam libertatem, internos vero affectus prorsus nego in potestate nostra esse*" (*ibid.*, p. 92). Both passages in Kolde's edition based on the *editio princeps*, Leipzig, 1900, 3rd. ed., pp. 67, 74.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 601; "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 117.

will in utter silence. Such a denial would, needless to say, have been out of place in works intended for the furtherance of the Christian life. In admonishing people to keep the commandments of God, to cultivate virtue and practise charity, we must necessarily take free-will for granted. On such occasions, therefore, Luther's language is the very reverse of that which we have just heard and furnishes a practical proof of the falseness of his theory.

Although he had commenced his attacks on free-will in 1516, yet in the practical writings which appeared in 1517 and 1518, in his exposition of the Penitential Psalms, the Our Father and the Ten Commandments, he speaks as though the Christian were free, with the help of grace, to hearken to his exhortations and follow the path of salvation. In his sermons on the Decalogue he even calls the opinion "godless," that any man is forced by necessity to sin and not rather led to commit it by his own inclination. All that God has made is good and thus all natural inclination is to what is good.[1] And yet, in 1516, he had taught that man of necessity, though not with reluctance, follows his predominating inclination to evil.[2]

When, at the commencement of 1520, he wrote his detailed "Sermon on Good Works"—to complete, or rather to vindicate, his theory of faith alone against the objections raised—dedicating it to Duke Johann of Saxony, he there expressed himself so unhesitatingly in favour of independent moral activity as to make it appear quite free and meritorious. "Since man's nature and disposition cannot remain for a moment without doing or omitting, suffering or fleeing—for life is ever restless, as we see—let whoever aspires to piety and good works begin to exercise himself in living and working at all times in this belief, learning to do or leave undone all things in this assurance [of faith], and he will then find how much there is to keep him busy." Doing thus the believer will find that everything is right, for "it must be good and meritorious."[3] Even concerning faith we read in this remarkable work, that it must be united to charity, nay, that this must precede it, though charity is in reality the peculiar and noblest work of an unfettered will which strives after God. "Such confidence and faith brings with it charity and hope, indeed, if we regard it aright, charity comes first, or at least with faith."[4]

At a time when he was already quite convinced of the absence of free-will, Luther wrote, in October, 1520, his tract "On the Freedom of a Christian man."[5]

[1] Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 1², p. 144.

[2] Thesis 16 of the Disputation of 1516 (see vol. i., p. 310): "*Voluntas non est libera, sed servit, licet non invita.*"

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 212; 9, p. 238; Erl. ed., 16², p. 135.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 210=235=131. [5] See above, p. 27 ff.

There he teaches that the Christian is "free lord of all and subject to none." The servitude of the body does not extend to the soul; in God's Holy Word the soul lives a free and godly life, enjoying wisdom, liberty and everything that is good; true, the interior man, in his freedom and righteousness by faith, has no need of any law or good works, but, since we are not altogether spiritual, we are obliged to exercise the body by means of discipline lest it resist the interior man, i.e. the will which rebels against God must be "quelled" more and more, so far as the carnal mind calls for subjugation, in order that the works which proceed from faith may be performed out of pure charity. In all his works man must endeavour to direct his intention towards serving and being helpful to his neighbour. This is to serve God freely and joyfully; by thus acting he will defy the upholders of ceremonies and the enemies of liberty who cling to the ordinances of the Church. In this way Luther is teaching the true Christian freedom, which "sets the heart free from all sins, laws and ordinances, and which is as far above all other liberty as the heavens are above the earth."[1]—And yet, after his previous assertions against free-will, we are forced to ask whether he had not himself destroyed the basis of all this, for the free-will he attacked was the fundamental condition of all spiritual action which might be called free, and surely quite essential to his vaunted "Christian freedom."

In his sermons, expositions and practical writings of the next few years he continued, with a few exceptions,[2] to speak to the faithful as though they still enjoyed moral freedom of the will and liberty of choice, notwithstanding the position he had assumed in the "*Assertio*." In what he says of earthly business and of life, public and private, his views are likewise not at all those of a determinist. Such inconsistency was altogether characteristic of him throughout his life.

In spite of all his attempts to make his view of the will acceptable and to accommodate it to the prevailing convictions of humanity, many, even amongst his own followers and admirers, were shocked at his attacks on free-will. People were scandalised, more particularly by the consequences involved.

At Erfurt his friends disputed as to how God could possibly work evil in man, and Luther was forced to request them to desist from enquiring into such matters, since it was clear that we did what was evil because God ceased to work in us: they ought to occupy themselves all the more diligently with the moral interests of the new churches.[3]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 39; Erl. ed., 27, p. 199. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 358 ff.

[2] See below, p. 288, the Sermon in 1531.

[3] To Johann Lang, April 12, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 331.

Capito declared himself openly against Luther's theories concerning the absolute enslavement of the will.[1] The Humanist Mosellanus (Peter Schade), a great admirer of the Wittenbergers, spoke so strongly at Leipzig against the propositions deduced from Luther's teaching on predestination to hell, that the latter was warned of what had occurred.[2] Many who had previously been favourably disposed to Luther were repelled, by his teaching on the enslaved will, and fell away then or later, for instance, the learned naturalist George Agricola.[3]

Mosellanus, like many others, now went over to the side of Erasmus, who, it had now leaked out, was growing more and more to dislike Luther the more the latter showed himself in his true colours.

Erasmus—His Attitude in General and his Attack on Luther in 1524

Erasmus had frequently been invited by the highest authorities to take up his pen and enter the field against Luther. This, however, presented some difficulty to him owing to his timidity, his anxiety to play the part of mediator and his real sympathy for many of Luther's demands. Even before Erasmus had reached any decision, Luther and his friends had already a premonition of the great Humanist's coming attack.

On August 8, 1522, Erasmus, while still wavering, wrote to Mosellanus concerning the desire expressed by the Emperor, the King of England and certain Roman Cardinals. "All want me to attack Luther. I do not approve of Luther's cause, but have many reasons for preferring any other task to this."[4] In May, however, a work on the question of predestination and free-will was already looked for in Lutheran circles at Leipzig, and the opinion was freely

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 657.

[2] Cp. Luther to Kaspar Borner, Professor at Leipzig, May 28, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 375.

[3] N. Paulus points out in his article "Georg Agricola" ("Histor-polit. Blätter," 136, 1905, p. 793 ff.), that this scholar had never been one of Luther's followers, and was particularly repelled by his views on the absence of free-will, which he opposed as early as 1522.

[4] "Luthers Briefwechsel," 3, p. 377, n. 6, from Weller's "Altes aus allen Teilen der Gesch.," 1, 1765, p. 18.

expressed that Luther "would probably get the worst in the encounter." Luther, nevertheless, sought to inspire his friends with courage and confidence.

That Erasmus should have been solicited by so many parties to write against Luther was due to the quite extraordinary fame and influence of this scholar who, by common consent, was the first authority of the day on classical and critical studies.

The prolific Dutch author was venerated with fanatical admiration by the younger Humanists as the founder and head of their school. Mutian had gone so far as to write: "He is divine and to be honoured as a god." The term "*Divus Erasmus*" was frequently applied to him. Since, owing to his peculiar standpoint in ecclesiastical matters, he was reckoned by Luther's co-religionists as one of their party, the request to write against Luther amounted to an invitation publicly to renounce all allegiance to a party which was seeking to secure him in its own interests.

His great fame in the domain of learning was unquestionably well merited. From his ever-changing place of abode, from England, Italy, the Netherlands and especially (1521–1529) from Basle, he sent forth into the learned world his books, all written in the most fluent Latin, and dealing not only with classical subjects and matters of general literary culture, but also with religious questions and historical criticism. Thanks to his philological learning he was able to handle most advantageously the text of the Bible and the Fathers of the Church. The applause which was showered upon him by all scholars who were dissatisfied with the traditional course of studies was due not merely to his polished language and his wit, but chiefly to the new method of which he made use, particularly in dealing with the Fathers, viz. to his endeavour to seek out the best and oldest sources with the help of criticism. Among the many who formed themselves on his example, and, so to speak, in his school, were several of Luther's friends and co-workers, for instance, Melanchthon and Justus Jonas.

The "*Enchiridion militis christiani*," published by Erasmus in 1501, was greeted with joy by the neo-Humanists as a new presentment, in harmony with the tendency of the day, of the duties of a Christian;[1] many of them had, however, no better conception

[1] We may allude, for instance, to the beautiful words which, strange to say, have been described by certain Protestants as a moralistic explaining away of the true "evangelical comprehension of the person of Christ and His work": "*Ut certiore cursu queas ad felicitatem contendere, haec tibi quarta sit regula, ut totius vitae tuae Christum velut unicum scopum præfigas, ad quem unum omnia studia, omnes conatus, omne otium ac negotium conferas. Christum vero esse puta non vocem inanem, sed nihil aliud quam charitatem, simplicitatem, patientiam,*

of Christianity than Erasmus himself, who had already then forsaken his Order—he was an Augustinian Canon—though he received the requisite dispensation only in 1517, and whose performance of his priestly duties was anything but satisfactory.[1] The writing in question, a devotional manual for the learned, also made him many enemies, for, in it, he attacked various popular devotions and religious institutions sanctioned by the Church, ostensibly in order to bring to light the true piety.[2] Even more so was this the case with his "Praise of Folly" ("*Encomium Moriae*," 1509), a satire on the morals and ecclesiastical conditions of his time, brimful of exaggeration and animosity against certain institutions in the Church, more particularly the religious life. Among those who were desirous of innovations, the book was so well received that it ran through at least twenty-seven editions during the author's lifetime. The proud, witty fault-finding of the great man achieved an equally great success in the "*Colloquia familiaria*," which appeared in 1518 and showed his style at its perfection. Intended as a handbook of latinity and general conduct, it was fated to be excluded from the more serious schools on account of the licentiousness of tone and language which pervades certain chapters.

The opinion of this leading spokesman of the Renaissance was, that it was necessary to break away completely from the Middle Ages; that for four hundred years Christ had been almost forgotten ("*Christus pene abolitus*"), and hence a return to the simplicity of the gospel was indispensable; to the "*simplicitas doctrinae*," secured by the stripping off of all the padding of scholasticism, was to be united the original "*simplicitas vitae christianae*" and neglect of external practices. He set up a "Philosophy of Christ," of which the bare sobriety had no need

puritatem, breviter, quidquid ille docuit" ("*Enchiridion*," Basil., 1519, p. 93). G. Kawerau quotes from the correspondence of Justus Jonas which he edited, 1, p. 31, the words of Eobanus Hessus (1519) on the "*Enchiridion*": "*Plane divinum opus*," and the following utterance of Ulrich Zasius (1520) on the same, from the correspondence of Beatus Rhenanus, p. 230: "*Miles christianus, quem tamen, si vel solus ab Erasmo exisset, immortali laude prædicare conveniebat, ut qui christiano homini veræ salutis compendium, brevi velut enchiridio demonstret.*" "Luther und Erasmus," in "Deutsch-Evangel. Blätter," 1906, Hft. 1, in the reprint, p. 4.

[1] In a letter to P. Servatius, July 9, 1514, Erasmus says: "*Voluptatibus etsi quando fui inquinatus nunquam servivi*" ("Opp.," ed. Lugd., 3, col. 1527). Perhaps he meant more by this than when he says of Thomas More, in a letter to Ulrich von Hutten, July 23, 1519, which is sometimes cited in comparison: "*Cum ætas ferret, non abhorruit* [*Th. Morus*] *a puellarum amoribus, sed citra infamiam, et sic ut oblatis magis flueretur, quam captatis et animo mutuo caperetur potius quam coitu*" ("Opp.," 3, col. 474 *seq.*).

[2] A. Dürer's exclamation given above, p. 41: "O Erasmus Roderdamus, Knight of Christ, ride forth," etc., is an allusion to the "*miles christianus*" depicted by Erasmus in the "*Enchiridion*." Kawerau, *ibid.*, p. 2.

of the Pharisaism of ceremonies, i.e. of the invocation of Saints and the veneration of images and relics, of monastic vows, canonical hours, fast-days, etc. Erasmus was not desirous of shaking the foundations of the ancient dogmas, nor did he, like Luther, lay hands upon the authority of the Church; yet he attacked so many of her institutions and with such terribly effective satire that he seemed to threaten the Church herself. Hardly ever had respect for the Roman See been so undermined as by his censure of the Popes and his tendency to contrast their assumption of authority with the humility of the Bishops of Rome in olden days.

Nor was even the Bible safe from his love of innovation, inasmuch as he was wont to elucidate more particularly the facts of the Old Testament with the help of a spiritual interpretation, termed by him allegorical, by which the historical and revealed contents were explained away. His wish, too, was that the Bible, with notes thus interpreting its narratives, should be read by all, even by the unlearned.[1] The "Simple Theology," which he was eager to set up in place of Scholasticism, beneath the splendour of the Humanistic language in which it was clothed, was exceedingly poor in ideas; so elastic was his language also, "so infinitely flexible and accommodating, so susceptible of being variously interpreted according to individual taste, that people of all creeds and of no creed . . . could point to him as their guide."[2] He had himself to blame for the fact, that he was regarded with great suspicion in Catholic circles, for, owing to his diplomatic caution, no one knew how far he intended to go in his censure of ecclesiastical institutions; whether he merely wished to blame the corruption then rampant, or whether he wished to strike a blow at the Church herself. Besides his positive hatred of the monastic life, what is particularly noticeable is his fundamental rejection of Scholasticism, which, according to his oft-repeated assertion, "had replaced God's Word by human ideas." As a Protestant theologian opines: "We may say, that the mighty intellectual work, which, in spite of all its faults, was embodied in the ingenious systems of the Schoolmen failed entirely to be appreciated by him."[3] Nor was this the only thing he failed to appreciate. He understood nothing of the mighty evolution of the Church in previous ages, of the character of her discipline and canon law, of her theology and of the great results attained by mediæval philosophy. He did not even possess sufficient knowledge of the practical requirements of his own age, when Luther's hand was already at work, demolishing the edifice of the Church. The one-sided scholar, blinded by the incense of praise, was unfitted for the task of directing his contemporaries in matters of religion.

It is wonderful to see how well he knew how to secure the good-

[1] The passages in proof of his "rationalistic interpretation of Scripture" are to be found in Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. trans.), 3, p. 21 ff.

[2] Janssen, *ibid.*, p. 15.

[3] Kawerau, *ibid.*, p. 5.

will of dignitaries, secular or ecclesiastical, by low flattery expressed in classic language. He exhibited very markedly certain qualities not infrequently observed in eminent Humanists, viz. want of character, fickleness in words and behaviour and extraordinary sensitiveness to criticism. His vanity was matched by the petty vindictiveness of the satires with which he lashes his opponents, and all who dared to disagree with him. Material assistance from the great ones of the earth was never lacking to him, the demi-god of the intellectual sphere ; when declining an invitation to go to Germany he could say : "The Emperor implores me to come to Spain, King Ferdinand wants me at Vienna, Margaret in Brabant and Henry in England ; Sigismund asks me to go to Poland and Francis to France, and all offer me rich emoluments."[1]

It is not surprising, that when Luther came forward many elements of his new teaching were at once welcomed with sympathy by Erasmus and his school.

"It cannot be denied, that Luther commenced to play an excellent part and to vindicate the cause of Christ—which had been almost wiped off the face of the earth—amidst great and general applause."[2] Thus wrote Erasmus to Duke George of Saxony as late as 1522. Many of Erasmus's sayings in his books and confidential letters in favour of Luther's reform were cherished as oracles. His testimonies in favour of Luther's writings and his private life were spread far and wide, though he really knew little of Luther's works (those written in German he could not even read), and owed all his information concerning his life to Humanist friends who were prejudiced in Luther's favour.

It was true that he was not personally acquainted with Luther, he wrote on April 14, 1519, from Antwerp to Frederick the Elector of Saxony, and, of his writings, he had, so far, read only certain extracts ;[3] "but all who were conversant with his life approved of it, since he was above every suspicion of ambition. The purity of his character is such that he even wins over the heathen. No one has shown his error or refuted him, and yet they call him a heretic." Hence he urges the Prince not to

[1] To Christoph von Stadion, Bishop of Augsburg, August 26, 1528, "Opp.," 3, col. 1095 *seq.*

[2] On September 3, 1522, "Opp.," 3, col. 731. Cp. Fel. Gess, "Akten und Briefe zur Kirchenpolitik Herzog Georgs," Leipzig, 1905, p. 352.

[3] At the end of 1520 he declares that he has only read ten or twelve pages of Luther's writings. To Campegius, December 6, 1520, and to Leo X, September 13, 1520, "Opp.," 3, col. 596, 578.

abandon an innocent man to malicious persons.[1] It was probably this letter which confirmed the Elector in his determination not to withdraw from Luther his protection. "Luther's life is approved by everyone here," Erasmus writes on April 22 of the same year from Louvain to Melanchthon; "opinions differ with regard to his learning. . . . Luther has rightly found fault with some things, would that he had done so with a success equal to his courage."[2] His letters to England are in the same strain: "All are agreed in praise of this man's life. It is in itself no small matter that his conduct is so blameless that even his enemies can find nothing with which to reproach him."[3]

To Luther himself, on May 30, 1519, in reply to a friendly and very submissive letter received from him, he complains of the attacks made upon him at Louvain as the alleged prime instigator of the Lutheran movement. He had replied—what as a matter of fact deprives the testimony he had given in his favour of much of its weight—that Luther was quite unknown to him ("*te mihi ignotissimum esse*"), that he had not yet read his books and was therefore unable to express either approval or disapproval. "I hold myself, as far as is permissible, aloof ('*me integrum servo*'), that I may be of greater service to the revival of learning. More is gained by well-mannered modesty than by storming." He adds other admonitions to peaceableness and prudence, and, after some cautious expressions of praise and thanks for his Commentary on the Psalms,[4] at which he had been able to cast only a cursory glance, finally wishes him "a daily increase of the Spirit of Christ to His honour and the public weal."[5] By this

[1] Cp. Max Richter, "Erasmus und seine Stellung zu Luther," Leipzig, 1907, p. 10 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, col. 431 *seq.* Cp. his statement to Jodocus [i.e. Justus] Jonas of July 31, 1518: "Luther had given some excellent advice; had he but gone to work more gently. As to the value of his doctrines, I neither can, nor wish to, express an opinion" ("Opp.," 3, col. 334).

[3] To Cardinal Wolsey: "*Vita magno omnium consensu probatur,*" etc. ("Opp.," 3, col. 322). Cp. his letter to Campegius, of December 6, 1520. To Leo X he writes, on September 13, 1520 (col. 578): "*Bonis igitur illius* [*Lutheri*] *favi . . . immo gloriæ Christi in illo favi.*" Assurances such as these may well explain Rome's delay in condemning Luther.

[4] It is of a portion of the work (described briefly in volume i., p. 386) which had then appeared, that Erasmus writes: "*Vehementer arrident et spero magnam utilitatem allaturos*" (col. 445). How ready he was to express approval of any work of which a copy was presented to him is shown by his reply to the Bohemian Brethren in 1511, who had sent him one of their several confessions of faith founded on the new interpretation of Holy Scripture: Of what he had "read in their book," he writes, he had "thoroughly approved and trusted that the rest was equally correct"; from any public approval he preferred, however, to abstain in order not to have his writings censured by the Papists, but to "preserve his reputation and strength unimpaired for the general good." Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. trans.), 3, p. 20 f.

[5] The letter is also to be found in "Luthers Briefwechsel," 2, p. 66 ff.

letter, which appeared in print a few weeks later, Erasmus offended both parties; to Luther's followers the author appeared too reticent, and to be wanting in cordiality; to his opponents he seemed unduly to favour the innovations. To justify himself he sent out several letters, one being to Archbishop Albert of Mayence on November 1, 1519. In this he admits the existence of "certain sparks of an excellent, evangelical spirit" in Luther, "who is not striving after either honours or riches" and "at whose writings the best minds take no offence." Luther should not "be suppressed, but rather brought to a right frame of mind"; he finds fault with the fact that in him an honest man has been unfairly and publicly defamed; Luther had only too just cause for his proceeding in the thousand abuses prevailing in ecclesiastical life and in theology. Here again he is careful to add, as usual, that he had not found time to peruse Luther's writings.[1] This letter, which was to reach Albert through Hutten, and with which he at once became acquainted, Luther calls an "*egregia epistola*," which might well be printed.[2] Hutten, in point of fact, had the letter printed before handing it to the addressee, and, on his own responsibility, altered the name "*Lutherus*" into the more significant "*Lutherus noster*."[3]

Erasmus, while thus whitewashing and indirectly furthering Luther's cause, wrote with less restraint to Zwingli: "It seems to me that I have taught well-nigh all that Luther teaches, only less violently, and without so many enigmas and paradoxes."[4] It was his desire to be reckoned a leader in every field.

After the breach between Luther and the ecclesiastical past had been consummated in 1520, Erasmus became more

[1] "Opp.," 3, col. 514. In his complaints concerning the disorders of the Church he says, for instance: "*Mundus oneratus est . . . tyrannide fratrum mendicantium*"; and then "*in sacris concionibus minimum audiri de Christo, de potestate pontificis et de opinionibus recentium fere omnia*"; in short: "*nihil est corruptius ne apud Turcas quidem.*"

[2] Luther to Lang, January 26, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 305: "*egregia epistola, ubi me egregie tutatur, ita tamen, ut nihil minus quam me tutari videatur, sicut solet pro dexteritate sua.*"

[3] F. O. Stichart, "Erasmus von Rotterdam," Leipzig, 1870, p. 325, Kawerau, *ibid.*, p. 10.

[4] On August 31, 1521, "Zwinglii Opp.," 7, p. 310. Cp. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People," Engl. trans., 3, p. 17, where the assertion that Erasmus had won over Pellicanus and Capito to the Zwinglian doctrine of the Last Supper is said to be utterly false. Though Erasmus declares that he never forsook the teaching of the Church on this point, Melanchthon nevertheless says that he was the actual originator of the Zwinglian denial of Christ's presence in the Sacrament. Melanchthon to Camerarius, July 26, 1529, "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 1083: "*Nostri inimici illum* [*Erasmum*] *amant, qui multorum dogmatum semina in suis libris sparsit, quæ fortasse longe graviores tumultus aliquando excitatura fuerant, nisi Lutherus exortus esset ac studia hominum alio traxisset. Tota illa tragœdia, περὶ δειπνου κυριακοῦ, ab ipso nata videri potest.*"

and more guarded in his utterances, whether public or private. His blame of Luther becomes ever more severe, though he is still desirous of finding a *via media*, and is willing to approve of far too much in Luther's action. The excommunication of the heretic by the ecclesiastical authorities he describes in one of his letters after the publication of the Bull as an unfortunate mistake, showing want of charity; a peaceful adjustment of the controversy might easily have been reached by means of a council of wise men; this course his biassed mind still regarded as feasible.[1]

It was on July 6, 1520, only a few days before Luther broke out into the exclamation: "The dice have fallen in my favour" (above, p. 24), that Erasmus, alarmed at the tone of Luther's controversial writings, wrote to Spalatin warning him that Luther was utterly wanting in moderation and that Christ was surely not guiding his pen.[2] He now exerted himself to dissociate from Luther those of his friends who had not as yet entirely gone over to him, and to retain them for the Church, for instance, Justus Jonas.[3] As for himself he declared he would never be dragged away, either in life or death, from communion with the ecclesiastical authority ordained by God.[4] His complaints concerning Luther's unrestrained violence and vituperation were ceaseless;[5] he saw the effect on Luther of the popular feeling, and the great applause he met with, he even attributed his obstinacy in great measure to the "plaudits of the world's stage," which had turned his head.[6] In his letters he also gives expression to a happy thought: the upheaval accomplished by the Wittenberg Professor was indeed a misfortune for his own age, but it might also be a remedy for the future. On November 20, 1522, he wrote to King Ferdinand: "God grant that this drastic and bitter remedy, which, in consequence of Luther's apostasy, has stirred up all the world like a body that is sick in every part, may have a wholesome effect for the recovery of Christian morals."[7] Erasmus also set to work to compose practical booklets on religion and worship. A "*Modus confitendi*" he published in 1525 was frequently reprinted later; its aim was to restore to honour the Sacrament of Penance so maltreated by the innovators. At a later date he even composed a sort of Catechism, the "*Explanatio symboli*" (1533).

[1] Cp. Fel. Gess, "Akten und Briefe zur Kirchenpolitik Herzog Georgs," 1 p. 354.

[2] To Spalatin, July 6, 1520, cp. Stähelin, "Theol. Realenzyklopädie," 5^3, p. 442.

[3] "Opp.," 3, col. 639 *seq.*

[4] *Ibid.*, col. 713, 742.

[5] So, for instance, "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 698 (1525).

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 693.

[7] "Opp.," 3, col. 826.

"In Luther I find to my surprise two different persons," Erasmus wrote on March 13, 1526, to Bishop Michael of Langres. "One writes in such a way that he seems to breathe the apostolic spirit, the other makes use of such unbecoming invective as to appear to be altogether unmindful of it."[1] To another bishop, on September 1, 1528, he writes: "Whatever of good there may be in Luther's teaching and exhortations we shall put in practice, not because it emanates from him, but because it is true and agrees with Holy Scripture."[2]

He continued to scourge the abuses in ecclesiastical life and to demand a reformation, but he did so in a fashion more measured and dignified than formerly, so that well-disposed Catholics for the most part agreed with him.

Owing to the new position he assumed, the Popes did not repel him, but showed him favour and confidence. They were desirous of retaining him and his enormous influence for the good of the Church. A Spanish theologian, who had written an "*Antapologia*" against Erasmus to reinforce the attack made upon him by Prince Carpi, tells us that Clement VII, after glancing through the work, said to him: "The Holy See has never set the seal of its approbation on the spirit of Erasmus and his writings, but it has spared him in order that he might not separate himself from the Church and embrace the cause of Lutheranism to the detriment of our interests."[3] According to one account, Paul III even wished to make him a cardinal; Erasmus, however, refused this dignity on account of his age.

Luther for his part was fond of saying, that he merely spoke out plainly what Erasmus in his timidity only ventured to hint at. He himself, he tells a correspondent, had led the believing Christians into the Promised Land, whereas Erasmus had conducted them only as far as the land of Moab.[4] He recognised, however, the great difference between himself and Erasmus in their fundamental theological views, for instance, as to the condition of man stained by original sin, as to his free-will for doing what is good, his justification and pardon, on all of which the Humanist scholar held fast to the traditional teaching of the Church because, so Luther says, he could not, or would not, understand the Bible. Luther was well aware that, as time went on, Erasmus frequently protested that he had

[1] "Opp.," 3, col. 919. [2] *Ibid.*, col. 1104.

[3] Ioan. Genesius Sepulveda Cordubensis, "*De rebus gestis Caroli Quinti*," in his "Opp.," 1 (Matriti, 1780), p. 468.

[4] To Johann Œcolampadius at Basle, June 20, 1523, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 164: "*Forte et ipse* [*Erasmus*] *in campestribus Moab morietur* (Num. xxxvi. 13). . . . *In terram promissionis ducere non potest . . . ut qui vel non possit vel non velit de iis* [*scripturis*] *recte iudicare.*"

never had any intention of writing anything contrary to the revealed Word of God as taught by Holy Scripture and the common faith of Christendom; that he submitted himself to the decisions of the Popes, that he was ready to accept, as the Voice of God, what the authorities of the Church taught, even though he might not understand the reasons, and be personally inclined to embrace the opposite. His standpoint was accordingly miles removed from that of Luther with its unfettered freedom in religious matters.[1]

In one of his Apologies Erasmus states of his earlier writings—in which, it is true he often goes too far—that "neither Lutherans nor anti-Lutherans could clearly show him to have called into question any single dogma of the Church"; though numbers had tried hard to do so, they had merely succeeded in "bringing forward affinities, congruities, grounds for scandal and suspicion, and not a few big fibs."[2] Concerning his tendency to scepticism he says nothing.

Of the excessive zeal of certain critics he says in the same passage: "Some theologians, in their hatred for Luther, condemn good and pious sayings which do not emanate from us at all, but from Christ and the Apostles. Thus, owing to their malice and stupidity, many remain in the party adverse to the Church who would otherwise have forsaken it, and many join it who would otherwise have kept aloof." He himself was not to be drawn by invective to embrace Luther's cause. He even ventures to affirm that he was the first, who, almost singlehanded ("*ipse primus omnium ac pene solus restiti pullulanti malo*"), opposed Luther, and that he had proved a true prophet in predicting that the play which the world had greeted with such warm applause would have a sad termination.—He speaks more truly when he seriously regrets having fanned the flames by his writings. Thus, in 1521, he writes to Baron Mountjoy: "Had I known beforehand that things would shape themselves so, I would either have refrained from writing certain things, or have written them differently."[3]

If Luther, after having met with strong opposition from Erasmus, in place of the support he had anticipated, denounced

[1] In his "*Diatribe*" against Luther, Erasmus likewise declares that he submits himself in all to the authority of the Church. Cp. Joh. Walter's edition ("Quellenschriften zur Gesch. des Protestantismus," Hft., 8, 1910), p. 3. Later he wrote concerning his attitude to Catholic dogma: "*De his quæ sunt fidei, liberam habeo conscientiam apud Deum*" ("Opp.," 10, col. 1538).

[2] To Christoph von Stadion, in the letter referred to above, p. 246, n. 1. Even in 1520 and 1521 he says that he had been the first to condemn the Wittenberg preaching because he had foreseen danger and disturbance. There, however, he dwells more on the detriment to learning.

[3] "*Si quis deus mihi prædixisset, hoc sæculum exoriturum, quædam aut non scripsissem, aut aliter scripsissem*" ("Opp.," 3, col. 681).

him as an infidel Epicurean, he only demonstrated anew how far passion and bitter disappointment could carry him.[1] "Luther," says Kawerau, "when passing judgment on Erasmus, sees only the dark side of his character, and this the more as years go by." "In his writings, and even in his most harmless utterances, Luther scents evil. In the contempt he pours upon him he is often grossly unfair, and, as a whole, his judgment of him does not do justice either to the greatness or the character of Erasmus."[2]

Even where Luther does not actually attribute unbelief and untruthfulness to his opponent he frequently goes too far in blaming his sarcasm. He says, for instance, at a later date, that Erasmus could do nothing but jeer; that to refute or disprove anything he was utterly unable. "If I were Papist I would easily get the upper hand of him. . . . By merely laughing at opponents no one will succeed in vanquishing them."[3] He could see in Erasmus only the idle cynic Lucian and nothing else. As early as 1517 he declaims against the "Erasmic" habit of "making fun of the faults and miseries of the Church of Christ instead of bewailing them before God with deep sighs." It has, however, been pointed out by a Protestant theologian that such serious complaints concerning the disorders in the Church are not lacking even in the earlier writings of Erasmus.[4]

[1] To quote here only one instance, Luther says (1544) in the "Tischreden" of Mathesius, edited by Kroker, p. 343, that he desired that the "*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*" by Erasmus (a much-esteemed and really epoch-making work) should not be further disseminated, "because it contains Epicureanism and other poison." Erasmus had destroyed many "in body, soul, and spirit," and had been an "originator of the 'Sakramentirer'"; he had injured the gospel as much as he had furthered the interests of learning. "He was a terrible man, and Zwingli was led astray by him. Egranus [Johann Wildenauer of Eger, who forsook the Wittenberg teaching] he had also perverted, and he now believes just about as much as Erasmus; his end was "*sine crux et sine lux.*" The latter remark concerning Erasmus's death calls for explanation. Erasmus arrived in August, 1535, in a weak state of health at Basle, a city already despoiled of every vestige of Catholic worship—in order to supervise the printing of his "*Origenes*" by the celebrated Basle printers. His illness had been increasing since March, 1536, and in the night of the 11th to 12th July of that year he died unexpectedly and without having received the sacraments. A fortnight before this, on June 28, in a letter to a friend, Johann Goclen, he had expressed his regret that he was lying ill in a city dominated by the reformers. On account of the difference in religion he would rather be summoned out of this life elsewhere. "Ep.," 1299. "Opp.," 3, col. 1522.

[2] Kawerau, *ibid.*, p. 15. He, however, remarks concerning Erasmus: "The instinct of self-preservation forced such admissions from him." There is no reason for doubting the "veracity" of his statements in favour of the Catholic Church.

[3] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 287.

[4] Joh. v. Walter, "Das Wesen der Religion nach Erasmus und Luther," 1906, p. 7. "That Erasmus set himself seriously to improve matters is shown by his letters," thus A. Freitag in the Preface to the "*De servo arbitrio,*" Weim. ed., 18, p. 594, n. 3.

A severe but not unfair criticism of Erasmus—which does not charge him with unbelief or apostasy though censuring him for other grave faults - is to be met with in two German writers, both of them well conversant with their age, viz. Kilian Leib, Prior of the monastery of Rebdorf, and Bl. Peter Canisius.

The former, in dealing in his "*Annales*" with the year 1528, complains of the effect on the religious world of the sceptical and critical manner of his contemporary. "Wherever Erasmus had expressed a wish, or even merely conveyed a hint, there Luther has broken in with all his might."[1] He is here referring to the strictures contained in the Annotations of Erasmus on the New Testament, in particular on Math. xi., upon the fasts and feasts, marriage laws and practice of confession, on the heavy burden of prayers, the number of Decretals and the endless ceremonial rules.

The other, Peter Canisius, speaks of Erasmus in the Preface to his edition of the Letters of St. Jerome. He says that Erasmus is distinguished by the "fluency and richness of his literary style" and his "rare and admirable eloquence." In polite literature he had undoubtedly done good service, but he should either have refrained from meddling with theology or have treated it with more reserve and fairness. No one before him had ventured to censure the Fathers, the Schoolmen and the theologians in so severe and overbearing a fashion, nor was one to be found more touchy when contradicted. "He has carried this so far that he is now made as little of in the Catholic as in the opposite camp. In his writings he paid more attention to the form than to the matter." The following sentence is worthy of attention: "I know not by what spirit he was really led, for he dealt with the Church's doctrine according to the theology of Pyrrhus [the sceptic]."[2]

[1] "*Annales*" (ed. Aretin, "Beiträge zur Gesch. und Literatur," 9, 1807), p. 1018: "*Ubi Erasmus quippiam optat aut fieri velle innuit, ibi Lutherus totis viribus irruit.*" Leib's "Briefwechsel und Diarien," an important source for that period, J. Schlecht has edited in J. Greving's "Reformationsgesch. Studien," Hft. 7.

[2] The preface has been reprinted in O. Braunsberger, "*B. Petri Canisii Epistulæ et Acta*," 3, 1901, p. 280 *seq.* The passage is on p. 283. Cp. Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," 21st, p. 15, where the work of Canisius, "*De incomparabili virgine Maria*," is also quoted.

What, we may ask in this connection, was the origin of the saying which became later so widely current : " Erasmus laid the egg which Luther hatched " ?

It is first alluded to by Erasmus himself in 1523, where he informs a friend that this had been said of him by certain Franciscans ; he adds, that he had indeed laid a hen's egg, but that Luther had hatched out quite a different nestling.[1] In 1534 he speaks more definitely of the German Franciscans as the purveyors of this saying, and in particular of the Cismontane commissioner of the Order, Nicholas Herborn, who with the assistance of other Friars had caused a volume of sermons to be printed at Antwerp in which appeared "the favourite asseveration of the brethren," viz. : "Erasmus is Luther's father ; he laid the eggs and Luther hatched out the chicks ; Luther, Zwingli, Œcolampadius and Erasmus are the soldiers of Pilate who crucified Jesus."[2]

Similar utterances were indeed current in Catholic circles. Canisius mentions that he had frequently heard a saying which agrees with the words in Leib : " *Ubi Erasmus innuit, illic Lutherus irruit,*"[3] and might be rendered : Where Erasmus merely indicated, Luther violently eradicated. So general was the feeling that the head of the Humanists had really paved the way for Luther's action.

As we have frequently pointed out, Luther's speedy and unhoped-for success is altogether inexplicable, unless his way had been prepared beforehand by others, and that particular kind of Humanism which Erasmus had been largely instrumental in furthering cannot but be regarded

[1] In the letter of Erasmus to the Lutheran Johann Cäsarius, December 16, 1523 : " *Ego peperi ovum, Lutherus exclusit, mirum dictum minoritarum istorum magnaque et bona pulte dignum.*" " Opp.," 3, col. 840.

[2] To Sinapius, July 31, 1534, in R. Stähelin, " Briefe aus der Reformationszeit," " Programm," Basle, 1887, p. 24 : The " proverbia ἀδελφικά," to use the term of Erasmus, runs : " *Erasmus est pater Lutheri ; Erasmus posuit ova, Lutherus exclusit pullos : Lutherus, Zwinglius, Œcolampadius et Erasmus sunt milites Pilati, qui crucifixerunt Iesum.*" Similar accusations, he adds, were heard also in other quarters. The Spanish theologian, L. Carvajal, remarks (1528) in his "*Apologia diluens nugas Erasmi in sacras religiones,*" that the Germans said of Erasmus : " *Erasmus peperit ova, Lutherus exclusit pullos.*" Ed. Cracow, 1540, Fol. C 1 a. The author was very angry with Erasmus on account of his calumnies against religious : " *Utinam Lutherus mentiatur, qui te* [*Erasmum*] *atheon dicit.*" Fol. E 3a.

[3] In Preface referred to above, p. 253, n. 2.

as one of the causes which contributed to the spread of Lutheranism.

It is true that Humanism in some regards presented an inspiring and attractive spectacle. The revival of classical learning, the union of which with Christian truth had been the original aim both of the Humanists and of the Church, who had encouraged them; the idea of liberty and of the rights of the individual; the criticism and revision of ecclesiastical studies; all this, within due limits, seemed to presage a spring-tide in the development of the Christian nations at the close of the Middle Ages. The sanguine dreamt of a happy amalgamation of the ancient faith with the new culture of an age which was striving mightily upwards in all that concerned citizenship. Yet even enthusiastic patrons of the Christian Humanism of the day could not praise all the ideas current among those of its representatives who looked up to Erasmus; in such quarters many were the grievances raised against the Church, it being urged that religion had been corrupted, and that a purer Christianity should be established on the model of the earlier ages, and minus the mediæval errors. Ideas such as these were distinctly revolutionary, especially when they had taken root in the heads of the masses in an even worse form. "It cannot as a matter of fact be denied," says the French Academician P. Imbart de la Tour, "that the Humanists by their mode of criticising, accelerated the gathering of the revolutionary storm-clouds of the sixteenth century."[1]

[1] "Origines de la réforme," 2, Paris, 1909, p. 439, whence what precedes is also taken. The author's opinion here quoted is the more remarkable owing to the fact, that in this chapter on "Christian Humanism," he unduly magnifies both it and its followers, for instance, Erasmus. He writes on p. 441: "Presque partout l'humanisme se montrera l'adversaire du mouvement (de Luther) dont il sera la première victime. C'est qu'entre le principe fondamental de la réforme et celui de l'humanisme il y a un abîme. Ce dernier n'entendait pas seulement rester catholique, il l'était, et par sa soumission à l'unité extérieure et par sa doctrine de la liberté, et par un esprit d'équilibre et de mesure si conforme aux habitudes de pensée et de vie du catholicisme." The first sentence, to dwell only upon this, makes out the opposition of Humanism to the Reformation to have been far more general than was the case, and speaks inaccurately of Humanism as its *first* victim. The first victim was the Catholic faith and practice throughout a large part of Europe, for the preservation of which the Humanists failed to show sufficient zeal. It is true that they met with a bitter retribution for their share in paving the way

It was in the nature of an expiation that, along with Erasmus, many like-minded Humanists, following the example of their leader, deserted Luther's cause, as soon as the air had been cleared by the master's work against Luther and the denial of free-will. At the head of the German Humanists, Mutian, now an old man, welcomed the defence of free-will embodied in the "*Diatribe*."[1] Zasius and Crotus, like Pirkheimer, returned to the Church. Others, especially those of Erfurt, were not to be separated from Luther, such were Justus Jonas, Johann Lang, Adam Kraft, Euricius Cordus, Draconites, Camerarius, Menius and Eobanus Hessus, who, however, wavered long.[2]

Summing up all that has been said, we must discount both the exaggerated charges brought against Erasmus, and the one-sided eulogies lavished upon him. A type of the unfair critic was Hierônymus Aleander, who was chiefly responsible for the violent attack made on Erasmus by Prince Albert Pius of Carpi. In 1521 Aleander declared: "Erasmus has written worse things against the faith than Luther"; he is of opinion that Erasmus had preached a real "intellectual revolt in Flanders and the Rhine-Lands."[3] Equally exaggerated in the opposite direction is the statement ascribed to the Emperor Charles V, which must have been due to the glowing accounts given by the admirers of Erasmus, viz. that Erasmus had greatly reduced the number of Lutherans and achieved what Emperors, Popes, Princes

for the catastrophe, in the destruction of much they had done which perished in the storm which submerged scholarship. Erasmus twice asserts his conviction: "*Ubicunque regnat Lutheranismus, ibi litterarum est interitus*" ("Opp.," 3, col. 1139; 10, col. 1618), and often repeats the same in other words. See present work, vol. v., xxxv. 3.

[1] K. Gillert, "Briefwechsel des Konrad Mutianus," Halle, 1890, p. 300.

[2] Cp. G. Kawerau in W. Möller, "Lehrbuch der Kirchengesch.," 3^3, 1907, p. 63.

[3] From Aleander's account in Balan, "*Monumenta ref. Luth.*," p. 100 (cp. pp. 55, 79, 81); cp. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. trans.), 3, p. 16. Erasmus, in the above letter, dated August 26, 1528, and addressed to Christoph v. Stadion, describes Aleander and his intimate friend the Prince of Carpi as the originators of the charge, that, by his denial of dogma, he had been the cause of Lutheranism: "*Cuius vanissimi rumoris præcipuus auctor fuit Hieronymus Aleander, homo, ut nihil aliud dicam, non superstitiose verax. Eiusdem sententiæ videtur Albertus Carporum princeps, Aleandro iunctissimus magisque simillimus.*"

and Universities had previously striven to do, but in vain. The allusion would seem to be to the great Humanist's work against Luther's denial of free-will.

What has been said tends to place in a true light a certain view which has been put forward in modern days. Thanks to a wrong interpretation of his antagonism to Luther's principles and of his criticism of Catholic doctrine and practice, an attempt has been made to represent him as the "father of religious universalism" and of religion minus dogma. His bold schemes for renovation it is said paved the way for a great "renascence of Christianity" towards which we might well strive even to-day. As a matter of fact this "original creator in the domain of religion," this "spokesman of modern religion," never existed in Erasmus. It is a mere figment of the imagination of those who desire the complete reformation of religion and seek to shelter themselves behind the great Humanist. What is really strange is that such a deformation of the Erasmus of history has been attempted by certain Protestant theologians, whereas in Luther's day Erasmus was denounced by Protestants as a free-thinker and unbeliever. There are other Protestant theologians, however, who candidly admit the futility of such efforts with regard to Erasmus.[1]

Catholics can see easily enough why the rise of Protestantism tended to bring back many Humanists, among them Erasmus himself, to a firmer and more clearly defined religious standpoint and to a more whole-hearted support of the Church. Erasmus, as stated above, frequently spoke of Luther's work as a "remedy" (p. 249). It was a remedy above all for himself and for the more serious elements among his own party, whom the sight of the outward effects and internal consequences of the new teaching served to withdraw from the abyss towards which they were hurrying.

In his Annotations on the New Testament, Erasmus had clearly expressed both his fundamental antagonism to Luther's denial of free-will and his own position. It so happens that the contrast between Luther and Erasmus

[1] Hermelink, "Die religiösen Reformbestrebungen des deutschen Humanismus," Tübingen, 1908. We may also mention here that Joh. v. Walter, in his edition of the "*Diatribe*," p. xxiii., criticises Zickendraht ("Der Streit zwischen Erasmus und Luther," etc., see below), "who lays too much stress on the sceptical utterances of Erasmus [in the '*Diatribe*']."

becomes apparent for the first time in Luther's correspondence of the famous year 1517. Luther had at that time been devoting some attention to his future opponent's interpretation of Romans ix., of which the words concerning Divine election had confirmed him in his false teaching, while supplying Erasmus with an opportunity to lay stress on the freedom of the will under the influence of grace. The Wittenberg professor, full of the spirit of his recently completed Commentary on Romans, had, during his reading of it, written to his friend Lang concerning Erasmus in words which seem to presage the coming encounter: "I am reading our Erasmus, but every day he pleases me less. That he should so boldly attack the religious and the clergy for their ignorance pleases me, but I fear he does not sufficiently vindicate the rights of Christ and the grace of God. . . . How different is the judgment of the man who concedes something to free-will from one who knows nothing besides grace!"[1]—In these words we hear, as it were, the distant muttering of the storm which broke out seven years later, when the two exchanged their thunderbolts, clearing the air and plainly disclosing the difference between the Catholic and the Lutheran standpoint.

When a report reached Luther in 1522 that Erasmus was about to oppose his teaching on free-will, he was carried away to say certain things in his letters which greatly provoked his opponent.

In a letter to the Leipzig Professor, Caspar Borner, he stated that Erasmus understood less about these matters than the schools of the Sophists (the Schoolmen). "I have no fear of being vanquished so long as I do not alter my opinion."[2] "Truth is stronger than eloquence, the spirit mightier than talent, faith greater than learning"; with his habitual confidence he says that were he only to stammer forth the truth he would still be sure of vanquishing the eloquence even of far-famed Erasmus. He did not wish to vex the scholar, but should he dare to attack he would be made to see "that Christ fears neither the gates of hell nor the powers of the air"; he (Luther) well knew the thoughts of Satan ("*quandoquidem et Satanæ cogitationes noverimus*").[3] Hence he seems to have regarded the doctrine of

[1] On March 1, 1517, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 88. See present work, vol. i., p. 43.

[2] "*Neque est ut timeam casurum me, nisi mutem sententiam.*"

[3] On May 28, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 375.

the absence of free-will as a sort of revelation, which the devil must necessarily oppose.

Erasmus got to hear of this letter. With the expressions it contained, viz. : spirit, truth, faith, triumph of Christ, he was familiar, for they were Luther's watchwords ; the innovators, following Luther's example, made use of them, in season and out of season, though they were not able to conceal their real nature, least of all from the sharp eyes of Erasmus. "All," Erasmus wrote in 1524 to Theodore Hezius, "have these five words always on their lips : evangel, God's Word, faith, Christ and Spirit, and yet I see many behave so that I cannot doubt them to be possessed by the devil."[1]

After long delay and anxious consideration, Erasmus finally decided to comply with the requests made of him and to publish a polemical work against Luther on the subject of free-will, for his own vindication and for the enlightenment of many whose eyes were turned upon him. In 1523 he set to work and forwarded a rough draft to Henry VIII of England.

He has frequently been said to have declared, in his witty way, that he had only yielded against his will to strong persuasion and that the work had been wrung from him ; that, writing of free-will, he had lost his own free-will, and was, therefore, not to be taken seriously. This legend rests upon a false interpretation of a passage, the text of Erasmus containing nothing of the sort.[2]

In order if possible to delay or parry the attack, Luther, about the middle of 1524, wrote a strange letter addressed to the scholar.[3] He there complains openly of the criticisms Erasmus had directed against him latterly and of his ostensibly insulting remarks, and informs him that he, the Wittenberg Professor, has nothing whatever to fear, "even though an Erasmus should fall on him tooth and nail ;" at the same time he begs him, with a most flattering eulogy of his gifts and standing, to consider well whether it would not be better to leave his (Luther's) doctrines alone ("*intacta dimittere*"), and to busy himself with his own Humanist affairs. "I desire that the Lord may bestow on you a spirit worthy of your name. Should the Lord, however, still

[1] "Opp.," 3, col. 809.

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 656 f. In the note on p. 790 it is pointed out that the passage in question does not refer to any work by Erasmus. A. Freitag, in the introduction to his reprint of the book, "*De servo arbitrio,*" Weim. ed., 18, p. 577, says : "The words of Erasmus, in his letter to L. Vives on Ascension Day, 1527 : '*perdidimus liberum arbitrium,*' do not refer to the work, '*De libero arbitrio.*'" The jesting words used by Erasmus in a letter to Auerbach, dated December 10, 1524, which have also been quoted in support of the legend ("*Profecto nunc habere desii liberum arbitrium, posteaquam emisi in vulgus*"), only mean that, even had he so desired, it was now impossible to withdraw a book already published. He wrote in exactly the same sense to King Henry VIII on September 6, 1524 : "*iacta est alea, exiit in lucem libellus de libero arbitrio.*"

[3] "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 319, "about April 15," 1524.

delay this gift, I would beg you meanwhile, if you can do nothing else, at least to remain a mere spectator of our tragedy ; do not write against me or increase the number and strength of my opponents ; particularly do not attack me through the press, and I for my part shall also refrain from attacking you." The writer was all too well aware how heavily the words of Erasmus would weigh down the scale against him in public opinion.

Erasmus, however, was not to be moved from his decision ; indeed, he felt still further provoked to write by an allusion of Luther's in the above letter to the kindness he had hitherto displayed towards godless and hypocritical foes ; should Erasmus dare to come forward against him publicly Luther vows he will alter this tone.[1] In the latter event Luther, in another passage of the letter, had declared regretfully, in perfect accordance with his theory of grace and the absence of free-will, that " Erasmus had not yet received from the Lord the gift of strength and an inward mind," which would have enabled him to ally himself freely and trustfully with him (Luther) in his struggle with the monsters who were attacking him ; even from Erasmus one could not expect what was beyond his power and lay outside his way. " On the contrary, we have accepted with patience and respect your weakness and the limitation of God's gift in you."

We may perhaps be permitted to remark here concerning the absence of the Divine action on the will, that Luther on other occasions did not allow himself to be swayed by " patience and respect," as in the case of Erasmus, least of all when dealing with the Pope and his supporters. On the contrary, he reproves them severely for their " terrible blindness " and says, that the wrath of God had led to the setting up of an empire of error and lying, in spite of the Church having been so often warned by Christ and the Apostles against the Pope, i.e. Antichrist. The only explanation was in 2 Thessalonians ii. 10 : " Therefore God sent upon them the operation of error, to believe lying " ; " this operation was so great (' *illa energia tam potens fuit* ') that they were blind even to the worst errors " ; thus it was that they had set up their horrid Papacy. Out upon you, he cries to those, who, on the Lutheran hypothesis, were unable to do otherwise, " the overwhelming effect of your delusion defies all opposition " (" *illa efficacia erroris potentissime restitit* "). " But I have attacked the Pope in his very marrow and teaching, not merely his abuses." " Had I not brought about his downfall by

[1] " *Ceterum clementia et mansuetudo mea erga peccatores et impios, quantumvis insanos et iniquos, arbitror, non modo teste mea conscientia, sed et multorum experientia, satis testata sit. Sic hactenus stilum cohibui, utcunque pungeres me, cohibiturum etiam scripsi in literis ad amicos, quæ tibi quoque lectæ sunt, donec palam prodires. Nam utcunque non nobiscum sapias et pleraque pietatis capita vel impie vel simulanter damnes aut suspendas, pertinaciam tamen tibi tribuere non possum neque volo* " (p. 320 f.). Cp. Erasmus to Melanchthon, September 6, 1524, " Corp. ref.," 1, p. 672.

means of the Word, the devil himself would have vomited him forth."[1]

The work of Erasmus, "*De libero arbitrio diatribe*," which appeared in that same year, 1524, at Basle, was a severe blow to Luther.[2]

The ground chosen by Erasmus in his long-expected reply to all the questions raised by the Reformers, viz. the matter of free-will, was singularly apt; he launched forth at once into one of the most important subjects, one, too, which was readily understood by the people. His task was the exposure of the religion of the enslaved will.

Though the author was not thoroughly conversant with the learning of the Schoolmen, which might perhaps have enabled him to place the relationship between grace and free-will in an even clearer light, and though in the work he is rather reserved, yet his refinement of judgment and his eloquence more than compensate for his defects; these at least insured him great applause in an age so favourable to Humanism. Even the theologians were, on the whole, satisfied with the scriptural proofs adduced by so learned a man, whose linguistic knowledge and exegetical skill gave all the more weight to his work. Many cultured laymen breathed more freely, as though relieved of a heavy burden, when the authoritative voice of the great scholar was at last raised against Luther and in defence of free-will, that basic truth of sane human reason and pillar of all religious belief.

Ulrich Zasius, the Freiburg-im-Breisgau lawyer, who had hitherto been hesitating, wrote in enthusiastic praise of the work to Boniface Amerbach.[3] Duke George of Saxony expressed his thanks to the author in a letter, with the honest and not altogether unwarranted remark: "Had you come to your present decision three years ago, and withstood Luther's shameful heresies in writing instead of merely opposing him secretly, as though you were not willing to do him much harm, the flames would not have extended so far and we should not now find our-

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden" (Kroker), p. 404, said in 1537, March 21–28.

[2] In the Leyden edition (Lugd. Batav.), 9, col. 1215–48. In German in Walch's edition of Luther's Works, 18, p. 1962 *seq.* New critical edition with introduction by Joh. v. Walter in the "Quellenschriften zur Gesch. des Protestantismus," No. 8, Leipzig, 1910.

[3] "Epp.," ed. Riegger, ep. 45. Cp. Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 5, p. 47.

selves in the distressing present state of things."[1] The moderation with which the champion of free-will wrote, was commended even by Melanchthon in a letter to Erasmus ("*perplacuit tua moderatio*").[2] With this, other critics, Martin Lipsius for instance, agreed.[3]

Luther was forced unwillingly to admit the kindness displayed by Erasmus, but the fact that the keen intellect of his opponent should have singled out for animadversion the most vital point of his teaching, as he termed it, was very bitter to him. The question dealt with, he said, certainly constituted the central point of the quarrel; it is absolutely essential that we should know what and how much we are capable of in our relations to God, otherwise we remain ignorant of God's work, nay, of God Himself, and are unable to honour, to thank, or to serve Him.[4] Luther accordingly admitted, concerning Erasmus's work—and this he was in his own way anxious to see regarded as it deserved—that the author, unlike his previous opponents, "had seized upon the real question at issue, the '*summa causæ*'"; he had not scolded him on the Papacy, indulgences and similar subjects, but had hit upon the cardinal point, and held the knife at his (Luther's) throat. God had not, however, yet bestowed upon Erasmus the grace which would have fitted him to deal with the controversy. "God has not so willed nor given it; perhaps He may bestow it later and make this opponent capable of defending my doctrine more efficaciously than I can myself, seeing he is so far beyond me in all other things [especially in worldly learning]." These words, so remarkable from the psychological standpoint, are to be found in Luther's reply.[5]

In his "*Diatribe*" Erasmus dwelt with emphasis and success on the fact that, according to Luther, not merely every good, but also every evil must be referred to God; this was in contradiction with the nature of God and was excluded by His holiness. According to Luther, God inflicted eternal damnation on sinners, whereas they, in so far as they were not free agents, could not be held responsible for their sins; what Luther had advanced demanded that God should act contrary to His eternal Goodness and Mercy; it would also follow that earthly laws and penalties were superfluous, because without free-will no one could be

[1] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1, p. 7.

[2] On September 30, 1524. "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 675. Cp. Enders, 5, p. 46.

[3] Enders, 5, p. 47.

[4] In the Introduction to the work, "*De servo arbitrio*," Weim. ed., 18, p. 614; "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 131 *seq.*, we read: "*An voluntas aliquid vel nihil agat in iis quæ pertinent ad salutem . . . hic est cardo nostræ disputationis, hic versatur status causæ huius. Nam hoc agimus*," etc. "*Hoc problema esse partem alteram totius summæ christianarum rerum*," etc. "*Altera pars summæ christianæ est nosse, an Deus contingentur aliquid præsciat, et an omnia faciamus necessitate.*"

[5] At the close of the work mentioned in the previous note, p. 786 = 367: "*Unus tu et solus cardinem rerum vidisti et ipsum iugulum petisti.*"

responsible ; finally, the doctrine involved the overthrow of the whole moral order.

The scriptural passages bearing on the question, more particularly those appealed to by Luther in his "*Assertio*," are examined with philological exactitude and with sobriety.

"Erasmus, in defending free-will," writes A. Taube, a Protestant theologian, "fights for responsibility, duty, guilt and repentance, ideas which are essential to Christian piety. He vindicates the capacity of the natural man for salvation, without which the identity between the old and the new man cannot be maintained, and without which the new life imparted by God's grace ceases to be a result of moral effort and becomes rather the last term of a magical process. He combats the fatalism which is incompatible with Christian piety and which Luther contrived to avoid only by his want of logic : he vindicates the moral character of the Christian religion, to which, from the standpoint of Luther's theology, it was impossible to do justice."[1]

The work of Erasmus reached Wittenberg in September, 1524. Luther treated it with contempt and ostentatiously repudiated it. He wrote to Spalatin, on November 1, that it disgusted him ; he had been able to read only two pages of it ; it was tedious to him to reply to so unlearned a book by so learned a man.[2] All the same, he did write a lengthy and detailed answer; that he delayed doing so until late in the following year is to be accounted for by the Peasant-War with its terrors, which entirely engrossed his attention ; it was also the year of his marriage. In estimating the value of the reply, upon which he then set to work with great energy, we must bear in mind the state of the author and the inward and outward experiences through which he had just gone. The impression made on his mind by the events of those days has left its stamp in the even more than usually extreme utterances contained in his reply to Erasmus. When once he had begun the work he carried it to its end with a rush ; he himself admits that it

[1] A. Taube, "Luthers Lehre über die Freiheit . . . bis zum Jahre 1525," Göttingen, 1901, p. 46. It is true that the author declares on the same page : "Because and in so far as Luther was moved to his denial by his refusal to admit of merit and by his doctrine of the assurance of salvation, every evangelical theologian will agree with him ; the admission of a system of salary between God and man is the death of evangelical piety ; but belief in free-will does not necessarily lead to this." Free-will, he declares, is, on the contrary, quite compatible with the "*sola fides*." On p. 45 he had said : "Luther's theology ends in contradictions which can only be obviated by the assumption of free-will and by a positive recognition of the powers of the natural man."

[2] "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 46.

was composed in excessive haste. We also know to whose influence his final decision to take the work in hand was due, viz. to Catherine Bora. "It was only at her request" that he undertook the work, when she pointed out to him, "that his foes might see in his obstinate silence an admission of defeat."[1]

Luther's Book "On the Enslaved Will" against Erasmus

The title "*De servo arbitrio*," "On the enslaved will," was borrowed by Luther from a misunderstood saying of St. Augustine's.[2] While the book which bears it was still in the press his friend Jonas commenced a German version and entitled it: "Dass der freie Wille nichts sei."[3]

However grotesque and exaggerated some of the principal theses of the famous work, Luther was at pains to declare therein that they were the result of most careful deliberation and were not written in the heat of controversy. Hence, as a Protestant historian says, "we must not seek to hide or explain them away, as was soon done by Luther's followers and has been attempted even in our own day."[4] Another Protestant scholar, in the preface to his study on the work "*De servo arbitrio*," remarks that "quite rightly it caused great scandal and wonder," and goes on to point out that "the hard, offensive theory" which it champions was "no mere result of haste or of annoyance with Erasmus, coupled with the desire clearly to define his own position with regard to the latter," but really "expresses the matured conviction of the Reformer."[5]

In this lengthy, badly arranged and rather confused work

[1] E. Kroker, "Katherina Bora," Leipzig, 1906, p. 280 f. "*Ipsa supplicante scripsi.*" Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 146.

[2] See present work, vol. i., p. 204.

[3] The Latin text in "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 113–368, and (with only unimportant differences) in the Weim. ed., 18, p. 600–787. A new German translation with introduction and explanations by O. Scheel, in "Luthers Werke," ed. Buchwald, etc., sup. vol. ii., Berlin, 1905, p. 203 ff.

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 663 f. This work of Luther's "was a stumbling-block to his followers, and attempts were made to explain it away by all the arts of violent exegesis; cp. Walch (in his edition of Luther's works), 18, Introduction, p. 140 ff." Kawerau in W. Möller, "Lehrbuch der Kirchengesch.," 3^3, 1907, p. 63.

[5] F. Kattenbusch, "Luthers Lehre vom unfreien Willen und von der Prädestination," Gottingen, 1875 (Anastatischer Neudruck, Göttingen, 1905). Many Protestant theologians have recently de-

we see, first, that Luther gives the widest limits to his denial of free-will and declares man to be absolutely devoid of freedom of choice, even in the performance of works not connected with salvation, and moral acts generally. He does, indeed, casually remark that man is free "*in inferioribus*," and that the question is whether he also possesses free-will in respect of God ("*an erga Deum habeat liberum arbitrium*").[1] "But it is doubtful whether we are to take Luther at his word." For "as a matter of fact he shows clearly enough that he does not wish this limitation to be taken literally."[2] "That his intentions are, on the contrary, of the most radical character, is plain from many other passages where he attacks free-will everywhere, and represents all that we do and everything that occurs ('*omnia quæ facimus et omnia quæ fiunt*'), as taking place in accordance with inexorable necessity."[3] He lays it down as a principle that God's omnipotence excludes all choice on man's part, and again supports this on an argument from the Divine omniscience; God from all eternity sees all things, even the most insignificant, by virtue of His prescience, hence they must happen. Even where God acts on man apart from the influence of grace ("*citra gratiam spiritus*"), according to Luther, it is He Who works all in all, as the Apostle says, "even in the impious." "All that He has made, He moves, impels and urges forward ('*movet, agit, rapit*') with the force of His omnipotence which none can escape or alter;

fended, with renewed enthusiasm, Luther's standpoint in the book "*De servo arbitrio*," under the impression that it places man in the true state of subserviency to God and thus forms the basis of true religion. See below.

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 781; "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 359. Cp. *ibid.*, p. 638=160: at most "*in inferioribus sciat* [*homo*], *sese in suis facultatibus et possessionibus habere ius utendi, faciendi, omittendi pro libero arbitrio, licet et idipsum regatur solius Dei libero arbitrio, quocunque illi placuerit.*" Taube (see p. 228, n. 2), p. 21, remarks, like Kattenbusch (above p. 264, n. 5), p. 48, that such degradation of free-will, even "*in inferioribus*," is to be found in Luther's earlier writings.

[2] Kattenbusch, p. 7 f.

[3] "*De servo arbitrio*," p. 615=134: "*Ex quo sequitur irrefragabiliter: Omnia quæ facimus, omnia quæ fiunt, etsi nobis videntur mutabiliter et contingenter fieri, revera tamen fiunt necessario, si Dei voluntatem spectes. Voluntas enim Dei efficax est*," etc. In the Jena Latin edition of Luther, 3 (1567), this passage has been watered down. Cp. also p. 615=133: "*Deus nihil præscit contingenter, sed omnia incommutabili et æterna infallibilique voluntate et prævidet et proponit et facit*," p. 670=200: "*Omnia quæ fiunt* (*sunt*) *meræ necessitatis.*"

all must yield compliance and obedience according to the nature of the power conferred on them by God."[1]

In the same way as he here speaks of a certain "power" in the creature, so also, in the same connection, he refers to "our co-operation" in the universal action of God ("*et nos ei cooperaremur*"). By this, however, he does not mean any real free co-operation but, as he says darkly, only an activity of the will corresponding to its nature and governed by law, "whether in submission to the universal omnipotence of God in matters which do not refer to His Kingdom, or under the special impulse of His Spirit [grace] within His Kingdom."

Luther's main object in the book "*De servo arbitrio*" is undoubtedly the vindication of religious determinism.

His denial of free-will had its root in his mistaken conviction that man was entirely passive in the matter of his salvation and in his attempt to destroy all personal merit, even that won by the help of grace, as at variance with the merit of Jesus Christ. He is fond of dwelling with emphasis on the absence of any co-operation on man's part in his justification, which is effected by faith alone, and on the so-called "righteousness" which had been effected in man by God alone even previous to man's choice. Even that free-will for doing what is good, which is given back to the man who is justified, does not strictly co-operate—lest the merit of Christ should suffer.

"This, then, is what we assert: Man neither does nor attempts anything whatever in preparation for his regeneration by justification or for the Kingdom of the Spirit, nor does he afterwards do or attempt anything in order to remain in this Kingdom, but both are the work of the Spirit in us, Who, without any effort on our part, creates us anew and preserves us in this state. . . . It is He Who preaches through us, Who takes pity upon the needy and comforts the sorrowful. But what part is there here for free-will to play? What is left for it to do?—Nothing, absolutely nothing."[2]

Here we have a renewal of the attack on his old bugbear, self-

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," p. 753=317: "*Deus omnia, quæ condidit solus, solus quoque movet, agit et rapit, omnipotentiæ suæ motu, quem illa non possunt vitare nec mutare, sed necessario sequuntur et parent.*" Cp. p. 747=308: God works upon the will with His "*actuosissima operatio, quam vitare vel mutare non possumus, sed qua (homo) tale velle habet necessario, quale illi Deus dedit, et quale rapit suo motu. . . . Rapitur omnium voluntas, ut velit et faciat, sive sit bona sive mala.*"

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 754=317, 318. Luther here shows a quite enigmatical want of comprehension for Erasmus's exposition of the ancient Catholic doctrine concerning the co-operation of the will with grace.

righteousness, his dislike of which leads him to universal determinism ; from his mechanical doctrine of faith alone it was merely a step to this mechanical view of everything.

We can only marvel at the ease with which, in his zeal for the supposed glory of the Saviour, he closes his eyes to the devastation which such teaching must work in the spiritual domain. He declares that he is not in the least afraid of the consequences. He fancies he has at last placed the whole motive force of human action in its true light and estimated it at its real value. For "it is above all else necessary and wholesome for the Christian to know that God foresees nothing conditionally, but that He knows all things beforehand unconditionally, determines them and carries them out by His unchangeable, eternal and infallible Will."[1] He builds up piety, humility and all consolation on the basis of this abnegation of the will. "Christian faith," he says, would be "altogether destroyed, God's promises and the whole gospel would be trodden under foot were we not to believe in God's indispensable fore-knowledge and that all happens through necessity ; on the other hand, the greatest and only consolation for Christians in the trials they encounter is to know, that God does not lie but invariably performs all things, that there is no resisting His will and no possibility of change or hindrance."[2] Herein, according to him, lies "the only possibility of leading man to entire self-abnegation, and to perfect humility towards God." Therefore "this truth must be proclaimed aloud, everywhere and at all times" ; here, as in the service of the Word in general, any *prosopolepsia*, *topolepsia*, *tropolepsia*, or *kœnolepsia* is pernicious and damnable. The Protestant theologian from whom the last sentences are taken remarks : "We have here a peculiar form of piety, and it may remain an open question whether the same is to be judged pathologically or not."[3]

Luther seems to ignore—if indeed he ever was acquainted with them—the reliable solutions to the problem of the Divine prescience and omnipotence in relation to human free-will, furnished both by philosophy and by theology from the times of the Fathers. He dismisses with utter contempt the distinctions and definitions of the greatest theologians of earlier ages.

On the other hand, he turns upon Erasmus and the theology of the Church with the formal charge : "You have denied God Himself by taking away faith in Him and fear of Him, you have shaken all God's promises and menaces." Without being clearly conscious of the fact, he is actually changing the true idea of God and seeking to set up a Being, who governs with the blind force of fate, in the stead of a God Who rules with wisdom, controlling His own power and restraining Himself with goodness and condescension.[4] Free-will, he says, belongs to God alone, Who alone is able to do what He wills in heaven and on earth.

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," p. 615=133.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 619=138. [3] Taube, p.19 f.
[4] "*De servo arbitrio*," "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 636 ; "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 158.

How the ideas of free-will and of God are treated in Luther's "*De servo arbitrio*" is made still more plain from the conclusions which he draws in this work from the denial of free-will, and deals with without the slightest reserve.

The first consequence is the absolute predestination of the reprobate to hell.

Luther here throws to the winds the will of God Almighty for the salvation of all men, and he does so, with regard to those who are delivered over to eternal death, with a precision which is quite shocking. They were incapable of being saved because God did not so will it. Owing to the reprobate, God has "an '*æternum odium erga homines*,' not merely a hatred of the demerits and works of free-will, but a hatred which existed even before the world was made."[1] Hence He inflicts eternal punishment upon those who do not deserve it ("*immeritos damnat*").[2] And if sinners are thereby confirmed in their sins instead of being converted, this does not matter in the least, for the Spirit of God will nevertheless, in due season, lay hold of the elect and change them into children of God ("*electi tamen manebunt*").[3]

The severity of his doctrine does not here differ in any way from Calvin's cruel views, though, as the fact is less generally known, Luther's name has not been so closely associated with predestination to hell as Calvin's. Luther's doctrine on this matter did not come so much to the front as that of Calvin, because, unlike the latter, he did not make capital out of it by means of popular and practical exhortations, and because the early Lutherans, under the influence of Melanchthon, who became an opponent of the rigid denial of free-will and of Luther's views on predestination, soon came to soften their master's hard sayings. Yet there can be no doubt that the book "*De servo arbitrio*" does contain such teaching quite definitely expressed.

The decree according to which God from all eternity condemns irrevocably to hell a great part of mankind, is, however, according to Luther, His "Secret Will" which we cannot investigate. With this His "Revealed Will" does not coincide. This distinction becomes a pet one of Luther's, by means of which he fancies he can escape the embarrassment in which the many passages of the Bible concerning God's desire that all men be saved, involve him. The "*voluntas occulta et metuenda*" of the "*Deus maiestatis*" determines man's fate irrevocably; upon this we must not speculate, for it is beyond human investigation. We must, on the contrary, according to Luther, not go beyond the "*voluntas Dei revelata*"—which he also speaks of elsewhere as the "*voluntas prædicata et oblata*," or "*voluntas beneplaciti*"—which, it is true,

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," 7, p. 724 *seq.*=276. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 730=284.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 712 *seq.*=259 *seq.*: cp. p. 627-629 *seq.*=147, 150 *seq.*: Kattenbusch, *ibid.*, p. 12.

strives after the salvation of all men and the removal of sin.[1] "From this we must conclude that God, as He is preached, is not in every instance the same as He Who actually works, and that in some cases in His revelation He says what is quite untrue."[2]

Thus the author is no longer content to place another meaning upon the biblical statements concerning God's will that all men be saved, as he did in the "*Assertio*,"[3] though even in the "*De servo arbitrio*" he still "attempts to place a different interpretation upon the passages of Scripture in question and to explain away by a desperate exegesis God's will for the salvation of the whole human race as expressed in the New Testament." Hence he takes refuge in the "*voluntas revelata*," which differs from the "*occulta*." Should the former not agree with the latter and revelation declare that God wills, whereas the "*voluntas secreta*" really does not so will, then the passages of the revealed word "are a proof that God is raised above our code of morality."[4] "The '*voluntas occulta*' becomes entirely arbitrary." The demand, Luther says, that God should act as we think right is tantamount to calling Him to account for being God. We must believe that He is just and good even when He transgresses the codes of Justinian and Aristotle. Is He, forsooth, only to condemn that man whom we think deserving of condemnation? Shall we look upon it as an absurdity, that He should condemn the man whose lot it is to be declared deserving of damnation?

[1] Loofs, "Dogmengesch.,"[4] p. 758: "God's universal action and His sovereign will determines [according to Luther's theory] man's destiny." That passages of the Bible, such as 1 Timothy ii. 4, as urged in the "*Diatribe*" of Erasmus, contradict this, Luther will not admit. "*Illudit sese Diatribe ignorantia sua, dum nihil distinguit inter Deum prædicatum et absconditum, hoc est inter verbum Dei et Deum ipsum. Multa . . . Deus . . . vult, quæ verbo suo non ostendit se velle; sic non vult mortem peccatoris, verbo scilicet, vult autem illam voluntate illa imperscrutabili.*" In connection with such thoughts Luther does not shrink from saying (p. 731=284): "*Si placet tibi Deus indignos coronans, non debet etiam displicere immeritos damnans*," and (p. 633=154): "*Sua voluntate nos necessario damnabiles facit.*" The passage here quoted on the "*Deus absconditus*" is to be found in Luther's "*De servo arbitrio*," p. 685=222, and has many parallels, for instance, p. 684, 689=221, 227. Of such passages Kattenbusch says (p. 17, *ibid.*): "Luther expressly advances it as a theory that God has two contradictory wills, the secret will of which no one knows anything, and another which He causes to be proclaimed." Luther assumes that God makes use of His "exemption from the moral law which binds us" by "not being obliged actually to strive after what He proclaims to be His intention [the salvation of all men] —in other words, that He is free to lie." According to Luther there is a great difference "between God not considering Himself bound by His word, and man acting in the same way" (*ibid.*).

[2] Taube, p. 35.

[3] See above p. 235 f.

[4] Taube, p. 35. See what has already been said (vol. i., p. 155 ff.) of Luther's connection with the Nominalism of Occam. It should also be compared with what follows.

Shall we consider it wrong that He should harden whom He chooses to harden, and have mercy on whom He wills to have mercy ?[1] From the standpoint that we must simply accept the "*secreta maiestatis*" even when apparently most unreasonable, he pours out his scorn on the efforts of the olden theologians to harmonise free-will with eternal election to grace.

His last word is that all we say of God is imperfect, inaccurate and altogether inadequate. As a matter of fact, however, as a Protestant critic already cited says,[2] "By the '*voluntas occulta*' everything is called in question that Christian theology affirms concerning God on the authority of the gospel. Luther not only saw, but allowed, these consequences, yet as he was perfectly alive to the danger which they constituted, he is careful to warn people against going further into the question of the '*Deus maiestatis.*' '*Non est interrogandum, cur ita faciat, sed reverendus Deus, qui talia et possit et velit. . . .*' Luther always held fast to the actuality and rights of the Secret Will. That he never forsook this standpoint even later, when the '*voluntas beneplaciti*' alone was of interest to him, has been established by recent research. In his practice, however, we find but little trace of what was really an essential part of Luther's theology."

The same theologian is of opinion that the inconsistencies in which Luther at last finds himself entangled are the best refutation of his denial of free-will and the powers of the natural man.[3]

A second consequence of his teaching may also be pointed out here. From his theory of the enslaved will Luther was forced to deduce that God is responsible for evil.

"It is indeed an offence to sound common sense and to natural reason to hear that God is pleased to abandon men, to harden and to damn them, as though He—He, the All-Merciful, the All-Perfect—took delight in sin and torment. Who would not be horrified at this ? . . . and yet we cannot get away from this, notwithstanding the many attempts that have been made to save the holiness of God. . . . Reason must always insist upon the compulsion God imposes on man."[4]

According to Luther it is quite wrong to wish to judge of God's secret, inscrutable action.[5] Fly, he repeats again and

[1] P. 729 *seq.* = 283. [2] Taube, p. 35 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[4] P. 719 = 268 : "*Hoc offendit quam maxime sensum illum communem seu rationem naturalem,*" etc. Cp. p. 707 *seq.* = 252 *seq.* : "*Ratio humana offenditur. . . . Absurdum enim manet, ratione iudice, ut Deus ille iustus et bonus exigat a libero arbitrio impossibilia. . . . Sed fides et spiritus aliter iudicant, qui Deum bonum credunt, etiamsi omnes homines perderet.*" P. 720 = 260 : "*Cuius (Dei) voluntatis nulla est causa, nec ratio, quæ illi ceu regula et mensura præscribatur, quum nihil sit illi æquale aut superius, sed ipse est regula omnium.*"

[5] P. 784 = 363 : "*Si enim talis esset eius iustitia, quæ humano captu posset iudicari esse iusta, plane non esset divina.*"

again, from these stumbling-blocks to faith. "*Quærere non licet.*"[1] Adore the hidden ruling. "*Adorare decet.*"[2]

It is true that the author, here as elsewhere, shows a certain reluctance to credit to God Himself the performance of what is evil; he prefers to speak of God's action as though it merely supplied man, whose own inclination is towards what is evil, with the power and ability to act.[3] The same theory is to be met with in Calvin.[4] But, the critics in Luther's own camp objected:[5] "This does not settle the question, Luther must go further. . . . He admits that, after all, God not only has a part in the origin of sin, since owing to His omnipotence He is the cause of all things ('*causa principalis omnium*'), but even made Adam to sin.[6] And yet, precisely on account of the difficulty, faith will not relinquish it." "Surely a '*credo*,' not only '*quamquam*,' but, '*quia, absurdum.*'"[7]

We may, in the third place, cast a glance at the ethical consequences of the theory.

Luther refuses to admit what all people naturally believe, viz. that if God gives commandments man must be able either to obey, or to disobey, and thus incur guilt. What he teaches is, that God has a right and reasons of His own to impose commandments even though there should be no free-will; since without Him we are unable to keep the commandments He gives them for the wise purpose of teaching us how little we are capable of. The law is intended to awaken in us a sense of indigence, a desire for redemption, and the consciousness of guilt. When once this is present, God's power does the rest; but the ground-

[1] P. 686=223. [2] P. 695=236. [3] Cp. p. 709, 711, 747=255, 257, 308.

[4] Cp. M. Scheibe, "Calvins Prädestinationslehre, ein Beitrag zur Würdigung der Eigenart seiner Theologie und Religiosität," Halle, 1897, p. 12. [5] Taube, p. 39.

[6] Kattenbusch, p. 11 f.: "Adam's sin, from which springs the depravity of the human race, was [according to Luther] called forth by God Himself . . . Adam could not avoid acting contrary to the command."

[7] "*De servo arbitrio,*" p. 633=154: In order that faith may reign, everything must be hidden "*sub contrario obiectu, sensu, experientia. . . . . Hic est fidei summus gradus, credere illum esse clementem qui tam paucos salvat, tam multos damnat, qui sua voluntate nos necessario damnabiles facit.*" Against this Taube remarks (p. 41): "Theological criticism cannot fail to assert that the Christian faith, viz. belief in a God of almighty and holy love, becomes impossible, if He arbitrarily predestines so many, indeed, the greater part of mankind, to damnation, and is the creator of sin. . . . In this case faith in the Christian God, and also morality generally, could only remain despite such theological theories."

work of all salvation is that we should become conscious of our nothingness, for which reason the belief in the enslaved will is to be proclaimed everywhere as the supreme virtue.

"God," he says, "has promised His grace first and foremost to the abandoned and to those who despair. Man cannot, however, be completely humbled so long as he is not conscious that his salvation is entirely beyond his own powers, plans and efforts, beyond both his will and his works, and depends solely upon the free choice, will and decree of another ('*ex alterius arbitrio, consilio, voluntate*')."[1]

Hence, instead of a moral responsibility for not keeping the commandments, all there is in man is a certain compunction for being unable to keep them. But this is surely very different from the consciousness of guilt. "Without free-will there is no guilt." "Luther can no longer assert that guilt is incurred by the rejection of grace." If a sense of guilt actually exists it cannot but be a subjective delusion, nor can it fail to be recognised as such as soon as we perceive the true state of the case, viz. that it is all due to delusive suggestion. "When Luther instances Adam's fall as a proof of guilt, we can only see in this an admission of his perplexity. In this matter Luther's theology—I mean Luther's own theology—is altogether at fault."[2]

The greatest stress is laid by the champion of the "enslaved will" on the alleged importance of this doctrine for the personal assurance of salvation.

It is this doctrine alone, he says, which can impart to timorous man the pacifying certainty that he will find a happy eternity at the hands of the Almighty, Who guides him; on the other hand, the assumption of free-will shows man a dangerous abyss, ever yawning, into which the abuse of his freedom threatens to plunge him. Better to trust to God than to our own free-will.

"Since God," he writes, "has taken my salvation upon Himself and wills to save me, not by my own works but by His grace and mercy, I am certain and secure ('*securus et certus*') that no devil and no misfortune can tear me out of His hands. . . . This is how all the pious glory in their God."[3]

[1] P. 632, 633=153, 154. Cp. Luther's Commentary on Romans, 1515-1516, on the humility and despair of self which brings about justification (vol. i., p. 217 ff.).

[2] Taube, dealing with certain Protestants, who, after having duly watered down some of Luther's theological peculiarities, assert that "the feeling of responsibility is satisfactorily explained in his theology."

[3] P. 783=362 *seq.*

With enthusiasm he describes this consciousness, carefully refraining, however, from looking at the other side, where perchance predestination to hell, even without free-will, may lie.[1] When it presses on him against his will he at once drowns the thought with the consoling words of St. Paul on the greatness of the inscrutable ways of God. His justice must indeed be unsearchable, otherwise there would be no faith, but in the light of eternal glory we shall realise what we cannot now understand.[2]

The not over-enthusiastic critic, whom we have frequently had occasion to quote, remarks: "Seeing that faith according to Luther is no act of our will, but a mere form given to it by God, . . . Luther is right in saying, that the very slightest deviation from determinism is fatal to his whole position. His '*fides*' is '*fides specialissima.*'" It is the assurance of personal salvation. But even though "combined with a courageous certainty of salvation, Luther's views, taken as they stand, would still offer no consolation to the tempted, so that when Luther has to deal with such he is forced to put these views in the background." The critic goes on to wonder: "How if the thought, which Luther himself is unable to overcome, should trouble a man and make him believe that he is of the number of those whom the '*voluntas maiestatis*' wills to hand over to destruction?" His conclusion is: "The certainty of salvation, about which Luther is so anxious, cannot be reached by starting from his premises."[3]

At the end of his "*De servo arbitrio*," summing up all he had said, Luther appeals to God's rule and to His unchangeable predestination of all things, even the most insignificant; likewise to the empire of the devil and his power over spirits. His words on this matter cannot be read without amazement.

"If we believe that Satan is the Prince of this world, who constantly attacks the Kingdom of Christ with all his might and never releases the human beings he has enslaved without being forced to do so by the power of the Spirit of God, then it is clear that there can be no free-will."[4] Either God

[1] P. 784=363: "*Si movet, quod difficile sit, clementiam et æquitatem Dei tueri, ut qui damnet immeritos,*" etc.

[2] *Ibid.*, and p. 785=365.

[3] Taube, p. 41 ff.

[4] "*De servo arbitrio,*" p. 786=366.

or Satan rules over men; to this pet thought he adds: "The matter stands simply thus . . . when God is in us, the devil is absent and then we can will only what is good; but when God is not there, the devil is, and then we can will only what is evil. Neither God nor Satan leaves us with an indifferent will."[1] "When the stronger of the two comes upon us,"[2] he says, "and makes a prey of us, snatching us away from our former ruler, we become servants and prisoners to such an extent that we desire and do gladly what he wills (*'ut velimus et faciamus libenter quæ ipse velit'*). Thus the human will stands," Luther continues, using a simile which has become famous, "like a saddle-horse between the two. If God mounts into the saddle, man wills and goes forward as God wills . . . but if the devil is the horseman, then man wills and acts as the devil wills. He has no power to run to one or the other of the two riders and offer himself to him, but the riders fight to obtain possession of the animal."[3]

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," p. 670=199. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 635=157.

[3] "*Sic humana voluntas in medio posita est, ceu iumentum. Si insederit Deus, vult et vadit quo vult Deus, ut psalmus* (lxxiii. [lxxii.], 22) *dicit: Factus sum sicut iumentum, et ego semper tecum. Si insederit Satan, vult et vadit quo vult Satan. Nec est in eius arbitrio ad utrum sessorem currere aut eum quærere, sed ipsi sessores certant ob ipsum obtinendum et possidendum*" (p. 635=157). And yet it has recently been asserted by some Protestants, that, according to Luther, grace was "psychologically active," whereas by the Schoolmen it was regarded as a "dead quality"; Luther's "delicate psychological comprehension of God's educational way" is at the same time extolled. N. Paulus rightly remarks ("Theol. Revue," 1908, col. 344), "that the Schoolmen advocated a vital co-operation with grace is known to everyone who is at all acquainted with Scholasticism." He quotes W. Köhler's opinion of Luther's system: Where man is impelled by God "every psychological factor must disappear." "All actions become in the last instance something foreign to man" ("Theol. Literaturztng.," 1903, col. 526). Paulus also refers to the following criticism by Köhler concerning the total depravity of man's nature by the Fall, to which Luther ascribes our unfreedom: "Involuntarily we feel ourselves urged to ask, in view of this mass of sinfulness, how, given the total depravity of man, can redemption be possible unless by some gigantic, supernatural, mechanical means?" ("Ein Wort zu Denifles Luther," 1904, p. 39).

F. Kattenbusch points out in his criticism of Luther's doctrine of the enslaved will ("Luthers Lehre vom unfreien Willen," p. 32 ff.) that Luther's aim was certainly to humble and abase himself before the greatness of God's grace, but that he went much too far; he wished to feel his salvation as the "result of God's arbitrary act"; this sentiment was, however, not normal, nor "religiously healthy" (p. 35 f.). He also remarks (p. 10): "If according to this [the comparison with the saddle-horse] the process of regeneration is made to

With frightful boldness he declares this view to be the very core and basis of religion. Without this doctrine of the enslaved will, the supernatural character of Christianity cannot, so he says, be maintained; the work of redemption falls to the ground, because whoever sets up free-will cheats Christ of all His merit;[1] whoever advocates free-will brings death and Satan into the soul.[2]

In such passages we hear the real Luther, with all his presumptuous belief in himself: "To me the defence of this truth is a matter of supreme and eternal importance. I am convinced that life itself should be set at stake in order to preserve it. It must stand though the whole world be involved thereby in strife and tumult, nay, even fall into ruins and dissolve into nothing."[3]

He ventures again to assert of Erasmus, that it had not been given him from above to feel, as he himself does, how in this great question "faith, conscience, salvation, the Word of God, the glory of Christ and even God Himself are involved."[4] Concerning himself, on the other hand, he assures the reader that, with no earthly motives, he is waging a great war "with a God-given courage and steadfastness which his foes call obstinacy; that he holds fast to his cause in spite of so many dangers to his life, so much hatred, so many persecutions, in short, exposed as he is to the fury of man and of all the devils."[5]

In various passages a lurid light is thrown on his inner

appear merely as a struggle between God and Satan in which God remains the victor, it is clear that the doctrine which Luther cherishes of the ethico-religious life is altogether mechanical and outward." Kattenbusch was quite aware of the influence of the mediæval schools on Luther. The after-effects of Nominalism, he says, are not, indeed, so very prominent in the Reformer, "yet it seems to me we must admit, that alongside the principal religious current in Luther, runs a side-stream of religious feeling which can only spring from Nominalism and Mysticism. . . . In so far as they influence Luther's doctrines, the latter may be said to spring from a polluted source. And, as regards the doctrine of the '*servum arbitrium*' and of Predestination, the Church which takes its name from Luther has assuredly done well in improving upon the paths traced out for her by the great Reformer" (p. 94 f.). Cp. Albert Ritschl's criticism of Luther's denial of free-will, "Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung," 3⁴, pp. 280, 296 ff.

[1] P. 779=356: "*Dum liberum arbitrium statuis, Christum evacuas.*"

[2] *Ibid.*: "*De libero arbitrio nihil dicere poteris, nisi quæ contraria sunt Christo, scilicet quod error, mors, Satan et omnia mala in ipso regnent.*"

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 625=143.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 625=144.

state. In language which recalls the pseudo-mysticism of his Commentary on Romans ten years earlier, he says, that the predestination to hell which he advocated was certainly terrifying, that he himself had frequently taken great offence at it and had been brought to the abyss of despair, so that he wished he had never been born; but then "he saw how wholesome was this despair and how near to grace."[1] "For whoever is convinced that all things depend on God's Will, in his despair of self avoids making any choice and simply waits for God to act; such a one is near to grace and to finding salvation." He himself "attributes nothing to himself, hopes for nothing and desires nothing" for his salvation; in thus waiting on the action of God's grace he is very nigh to salvation, though he is as it were dead, stifled by the consciousness of guilt, and spiritually buried in hell; "whoever has read our works will be familiar with all this."[2]

The echo of the pseudo-mystical ideas in which he had formerly steeped himself is plainly discernible in these words which go to form one of the most remarkable of the pictures he has left us of his state.

Even the "self-righteous," whom he had at one time so bitterly assailed, again rise from their graves. The admission of free-will, he tells them, destroys all inward peace. After every work performed, the question still rankles: "Is it pleasing to God, or does God require something more? This is attested by the experience of all self-righteous (*iustitiarii*), and I myself, to my cost, was familiar with it for many long years."[3]

On the same page he gives us a glimpse of the psychological source whence his whole theory of the enslaved will springs. The doctrine was born of personal motives and fashioned to suit his own state of soul. None the less, he insists that it must also become the common property of all the faithful which none can do without, nay, the very basis of the new Christianity. "Without this doctrine I

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," p. 719=268: "*Ego ipse non semel offensus sum usque ad profundum et abyssum desperationis, ut optarem, nunquam esse me creatum hominem, antequam scirem, quam salutaris illa esset desperatio et quam gratiæ propinqua.*"

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 633=154. To the reader of the present work it will also be familiar. Compare the passages previously quoted, vol. i., 218 f., 235, 238 ff., 259, 317 f., 379, 381. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 783=362 *seq.*

should believe it necessary to plague myself with uncertainty and to beat the air with hopeless efforts, even were there no perils for the soul, no tribulations and no devils. Though I should live and work for all eternity, my conscience would never attain to a real peace and be able to say to itself, you have done enough for God." He goes so far as to say : " For myself I admit, that, were free-will offered me, I should not care to have it ; I should not wish to see anything placed within my power by means of which I might work for my salvation, because I should never be able to withstand and endure the trials and dangers of life and the assaults of so many devils."[1]

The last words of the book even exceed the rest in confidence, and the audacity of his demand that his work should be accepted without question almost takes away one's breath : " In this book I have not merely theorised ; I have set up definite propositions, and these I shall defend ; no one will I permit to pass judgment on them, and I advise all to submit to them. May the Lord Whose cause is here vindicated," he says, addressing himself to Erasmus, " give you light to make of you a vessel to His honour and glory. Amen."[2]

The great importance of the work " *De servo arbitrio* " for a knowledge of the religious psychology of its author may warrant a description of some of its other psychological aspects, and first of the connection discernible between the denial of free-will and Luther's so-called inward experiences, which were supposed to be behind his whole enterprise.

[1] " *De servo arbitrio*," p. 783=262 f : " *Ego sane me confiteor, si qua fieri posset, nollem mihi dari liberum arbitrium, aut quippiam in manu mea relinqui, quo ad salutem conari possem*," etc.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 787=368 : " *Ego vero hoc libro non contuli, sed asserui et assero, ac penes nullum volo esse iudicium, sed omnibus suadeo, ut præstent obsequium.*" The extraordinary self-confidence of these words is more easily explained if we consider them as aimed against the literary device of Erasmus. After the manner of the Humanists, at the beginning of his " *Diatribe*," he had declared that he intended merely to enter upon an examination, a *collatio* (cp. *διατριβή*), and that he hated logical demonstrations, an exaggeration for which Luther soundly rated him in the very first pages, urging that he must be either a " frivolous orator " or a " godless writer," if he could not take so important a question seriously (p. 120). The termination of Erasmus's work, where he says : " *Contuli, penes alios stet ultimum iudicium* " (ed. J. v. Walter, p. 92), is played upon word for word in the conclusion of the " *De servo arbitrio.*"

He always believed he was following the irresistible pull of grace, and that he was merely treading the path appointed to him from above. In this work he breaks out into a loud hymn in praise of the irresistibility of the Divine action. "All that I have done," he exclaims, "was not the result of my own will; this God knows, and the world, too, should have known it long ago. Hence, what I am and by what spirit and council I was drawn into the controversy is God's business."[1] In this explanation, so typical of his character and way of thinking, is summed up his reply to that argument of Erasmus against his doctrine, particularly of free-will, where the latter had confronted him with the teaching of the whole of the Church's past.

For more than ten years, Luther adds, he had to listen to the reproach of his conscience: How dare you venture to overthrow the ancient teaching of all men and of the Church, which has been confirmed by saints, martyrs and miracles? "I do not think anyone has ever had to fight with this objection as I had. Even to me it seemed incredible that this impregnable stronghold which had so long withstood the storms, should fall. I adjure God, and swear by my very soul, that, had I not been driven, had I not been forced by my own insight and the evidence of things, my resistance would not have ceased even to this day." But, under the higher impulse, he had suffered authorities ancient and modern to pass like a flood over his head that God's grace might alone be exalted. "Since this is my only object, the spirit of the olden saints and martyrs and their wonder-working power witness in my favour." The utter rigidity of his doctrine and line of thought, and the connection between his present attack on freedom and his own ostensible unfreedom in God's hands could hardly be placed in a clearer light than here in Luther's reply to the argument of Erasmus.

In another passage he describes, perhaps unconsciously, his experiences with his own will, so inclined to contradiction and anger; he says: That the will is not free is evident from the fact that, "it becomes the more provoked the greater the opposition it encounters. . . .[2] Whoever pursues an object passionately is not open to correction, as experience shows. If he gives way, this is not willingly, but under pressure, and because it serves his purpose. It is only the man who has no interest whatever who allows things to take their own course."[3]

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," p. 641=162 *seq.*

[2] "*Quod probat eius indignatio. Hoc non fieret, si esset libera vel haberet liberum arbitrium.*" The effect of egotism in man depraved by original sin is here classed by him with the enslavement of the will; he was ever given to exaggerating the strength of concupiscence. Cp. vol. i., pp. 70 f., 110 ff.

[3] P. 634=156.

From time to time the several pet ideas which had played a part in his previous development are harnessed to his argument and made to prove the servitude of the will.

We are conscious, he says, that, pressed down to the earth by concupiscence, we do not act as we should; hence man is not free to do what is good. The "sting" of this inability remains, as experience teaches, in spite of all theological distinctions. Natural reason, which groans so loudly under it and seeks to resist God's action, would prove it even were it not taught in Holy Scripture. But Paul, throughout the whole of his Epistle to the Romans, while vindicating grace, teaches that we are incapable of anything, even when we fancy we are doing what is good.[1]

And further, the desire of gaining merit for heaven—the supposed error which he opposed quite early in his career owing to his distaste for works generally—can only be finally vanquished when the idol of free-will is overthrown. Then, too, he says, the fear of undeserved damnation by God also vanishes; for if there be no merit for heaven, then neither can there be any for hell; accordingly we may say without hesitation what must otherwise be repellent to every mind, viz. that God condemns to hell although man has not deserved it ("*immeritos damnat*");[2] this is the highest degree of faith, to hold fast to the belief that "God is righteous when of His own will He makes us of necessity to be worthy of damnation ('*necessario damnabiles facit*'), so that He would seem, as Erasmus says, to take delight in the torments of the damned and be more worthy of hatred than of love."[3]

Here another element of his earlier development and mental trend comes into view, viz. a disregard for the rights of reason, based ostensibly on the rights of faith.

The denial of free-will seems to him in this regard quite attractive—such at least is the impression conveyed. For, when we deny the freedom of the will, so much becomes contradictory and mysterious to our reason. But so much the better! "Reason speaks nothing but madness and foolishness, especially concerning holy things."[4] "Faith," so he declares at great length, "has to do with things that do not appear (Heb. xi. 1); in order that true faith may enter in, everything that is to be believed must be wrapped in darkness. But things cannot be more completely concealed than when what is seemingly contradictory is presented to the mind, to the senses and to experience."[5] In the present case, according to Luther, the apparent injustice of God in the "seemingly unjust" punishment of sinners, who are not free agents, is a grand motive for faith in His Justice.[6] Luther

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," p. 720=269.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 730=283. Here he is seeking to prove, "(*Deum non*) *talem esse oportere, qui merita respiciat in damnandis.*"

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 633=154. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 673=204. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 633=154.

[6] "*Hic est fidei summus gradus, credere illum esse clementem, qui tam paucos salvat, tam multos damnat. . . . Si possem ulla ratione comprehendere, quomodo is sit Deus misericors et iustus, qui tantam iram et*

here displays his love of paradox. Even more than in his other writings plentiful opportunity for paradox presents itself in the "*De servo arbitrio*," and of it he makes full use. "God makes alive by putting to death," he writes in the passage under consideration, "He renders guilty and thereby justifies; He drags down the soul to hell and thereby raises it to heaven."

Among the forcible expressions by which, here as elsewhere, he attempts to convince both himself and others, that he is in the right, are the following: "Liberty of choice is a downright lie ('*merum mendacium*')."[1] "Whoever assigns free-will to man, thereby makes him Divine, and thus commits the worst form of sacrilege."[2] "To get rid altogether of the term free-will would be the best and most pious work ('*tutissimum et religiosissimum*')."[3] Whoever follows the road of Erasmus "is rearing within himself a Lucian—or a hog of the breed of Epicurus."[4] "Erasmus concedes even more to free-will than all the sophists hitherto."[5] "He denies Christ more boldly than the Pelagians,"[6] and those who hold with him are "double-dyed Pelagians, who merely make a pretence of being their opponents."[7] But he himself, Luther, had never fallen so low as to defend free-will: "I have always, up to this very hour, advocated in my writings the theory that free-will is a mere name."[8]

In this last assertion he repudiates his Catholic days and refuses even to take into account the works dating from that time; in his Commentary on the Psalms he had expressly admitted free-will for doing what is good and for the choice in the matter of personal salvation; it is true, however, that he never published this work. But in many of the writings composed and published even after his apostasy he had clearly assumed free-will in man and made it the basis of his practical exhortations, as shown above (p. 239). Now, however, he prefers to forget all such admissions.[9]

iniquitatem ostendit, non esset opus fide. Nunc cum id comprehendi non potest, fit locus exercendæ fidei."

[1] "*De servo arbitrio*," p. 602=119. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 636=158.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 638=160. [4] P. 605=123. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 601=117.
[6] P. 664=192. The Weimar editor remarks of a similar assertion of Luther's on p. 664: "There is no doubt that Luther in this passage draws conclusions from the definition of Erasmus (viz. of free-will) which do not directly follow from it." In confirmation of this Kattenbusch (p. 28) is quoted where he speaks of "Luther's tactics in his controversy with Erasmus, the object of which was . . . to convict Erasmus in one way or another, usually by distorting his words, of rendering grace, the Holy Ghost, or Christ, superfluous for the attainment of salvation." Kattenbusch instances in support of this pp. 191 *seq.*, 193, 208, 213, 224, 231, 238, 287, 303, 324, 330, 354, etc., in the Erlangen ed.

[7] P. 770=342. "And yet Erasmus, as against the Pelagians, always upheld the necessity of the *gratia peculiaris*." Thus the Weim. ed., 18, p. 770, n. 2. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 756=320.

[9] Luther says in the passage quoted: "*Exstant themata et problemata, in quibus perpetuo asserui usque in hanc horam, liberum arbitrium esse nihil et rem* (*eo verbo tum utebar*) *de solo titulo*." The last

On the other hand he pretends to recall that in his Catholic days, "Christ had been represented as a terrible judge, Who must be placated by the intercession of His mother and the saints; that the many works, ceremonies, Religious Orders and vows were invented to propitiate Christ and to obtain His grace."[1] Out of this is forged a fresh proof, drawn from his own experience, of the servitude of the will. For had Christ not been regarded exclusively as a judge, but as a "sweet mediator," Who by His blood has redeemed all, then recourse would not have been had to the empty works of a self-righteous free-will. As it was, however, he had been made to feel strongly, that this delusion of works and free-will could only lead to despair.—Yet if, in his agony of soul, he really had sought and found peace of conscience in the theory of the enslaved will, how can we explain his many statements, made at almost that very time, concerning his enduring inward anguish and doubts?[2] The Protestant theologian, O. Scheel, the last to translate and expound the "*De servo arbitrio*," says of the comfort that Luther professed to have derived from the absence of free-will and from the theory of predestination, that "in the Reformer's piety a tendency is discernible which militates against the supposed whole-hearted and settled confidence of his faith in the redemption."[3]

Contradictions formed an integral part of Luther's psychology. Long pages of this work are full of them, though Luther seems quite unaware of his inconsistencies, obscurities and confusion. Conflicting lines of thought may be traced, similar to those which appeared in the Commentary on Romans (vol. i., p. 256), while the author was still a young man. They indicate a mentality singularly deficient in exactitude and clearness. The workshop where his ideas were fashioned was assuredly not an orderly one.

In the first place the main contention is very involved, while the statements that the will of the man who does what is evil is moved by God seem conflicting. The "*movet, agit, rapit*" in which the action of God on the will usually consists, does not here assert its sway; the Divine Omnipotence, which, as a rule, is the cause of all action, interferes

words refer to the 13th Thesis of his Heidelberg Disputation (see vol. i., p. 317). The Weimar editor quotes against the "*perpetuo asserui*," "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 32, and 4, p. 295, with the remark: "These are exceptions of which Erasmus could not be aware." It is not, however, a question of Erasmus, but whether Luther was telling the truth when he said: "It is false that I ever admitted free-will" ("*antea non nihil illi tribuerim*").

[1] P. 778=354. [2] Cp. vol. v., xxxii. 4.

[3] Luther's Works ed. by Buchwald, etc., 2. Supplementary volume, 1905, p. 530.

here, either not at all, or at least less strongly than usual—God must not be made the direct author of sin. This illogical twisting of his theory is particularly noticeable where great sins of mighty consequence are in question. Is God to be regarded as having caused the Fall of Adam and the treason of Judas? Luther certainly does not answer this question in the affirmative so categorically as Melanchthon in his "*Loci theologici.*"[1] Here he carefully avoids speaking of an irresistible impulse of the will given by God; for the time being we seem to lose sight altogether of God's imperative and exclusive action.

In the case of the betrayal of Judas, as Scheel points out, Luther does not mention any necessity "which compelled Judas to act as he did"; Luther seems, at least in certain passages, to look on that act as necessary, only because, having been foreseen by God, it "inevitably occurs at the time appointed."[2] Yet elsewhere he says: "His will [that of the traitor] was the work of God; God by His Almighty Power moved his will as He does all that is in the world."[3]

A similar confusion is apparent in his statements concerning Adam's Fall. Adam was not impelled to his sin, but the Spirit of God forsook him, and intentionally placed him in a position in which he could not do otherwise than fall—even though his will was as yet free and though as yet he felt no attraction towards evil as the result of original sin. May we then say after all that God brought about the Fall and was Himself the cause of the depravity of the whole human race through original sin? To this question, which Luther himself raises, the only answer he gives is: "He is God; of His willing there is no cause or reason," because no creature is above Him and He Himself "is the rule of all things."[4] Because He wills a thing, it is good, "not

[1] Cp. Melanchthon's "*Loci theologici*" (1521), in the third edition by Plitt-Kolde, 1900, p. 87.' In this work, in which "the fundamental ideas of Luther found a classical expression," the theology is "strongly predestinarian in character, and even answers affirmatively the question: '*utrum Deus mala faciat.*'" Kawerau, in Möller, "Lehrb. der Kirchengesch.," 3³, 1907, pp. 41, 43. The "*Loci*" Luther speaks of in "*De servo arbitrio*" (Weim. ed., 18, p. 601; "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 117) as an "*invictus libellus, meo iudicio non solum immortalitate, sed canone quoque ecclesiastico dignus.*"

[2] Scheel, *ibid.* (above, p. 264, n. 3), p. 400.

[3] "*Fingat, refingat, cavilletur, recavilletur Diatribe, quantum volet. Si præscivit Deus, Iudam fore proditorem, necessarie Iudas fiebat proditor, nec erat in manu Judæ aut ullius creaturæ, aliter facere aut voluntatem mutare, licet id fecerit volendo non coactus, sed velle illud erat opus Dei, quod omnipotentia sua movebat, sicut et omnia alia.*" "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 715; "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 263.

[4] "*Cur permisit (Deus) Adam ruere? . . . Deus est, cuius voluntatis nulla est causa nec ratio,*" etc. *Ibid.*, p. 712=260.

because He must or ought so to will." In the case of the creature it is otherwise; "His will must have reason and cause, not so, however, the will of the Creator."[1] What seems to follow from these Occamistic subtleties is, that Adam's sin was after all "brought about by God,"[2] and that Adam could not do otherwise than sin, even though God merely placed him in a position where sin was inevitable, but that he was nevertheless punished, and with him all his descendants. But is it so certain that in Adam's case Luther excludes a real impulse, a real inner compulsion to transgress? The fact is that certain of his statements on this question present some difficulty. "Since God moves and does all, we must take it that He moves and acts even in Satan and in the godless."[3] It is true, according to Luther, that He acts in them "as He finds them, i.e. since they are turned away from God and are wicked, and are carried away by the impulse of Divine Omnipotence (*'rapiuntur motu illo divinæ omnipotentiæ'*), they do only what is contrary to God and evil. . . . He works what is evil in the wicked because the instrument, which is unable to withdraw itself from the impelling force of His might, is itself evil."[4] If this means that the impulse on God's part must in every case have an effect conformable to the condition of the instrument moved, then, in Adam's case, its effect should surely have been good, inasmuch as Adam, being without original sin, was not inclined to evil by any passions. If then Adam fell we can only infer that the Almighty allowed an entirely different impulse from the ordinary one to take effect, one which led directly to the Fall. How, in that case, could God be exonerated from being the author of sin? Luther, unfortunately, was not in the habit of reconciling his conflicting thoughts. According to him there is nothing unreasonable in God's punishing the first man so severely for no fault of his. Why? It is mere "malice on the part of the human heart" to boggle at the punishment of the innocent; it takes for granted the reward which, without any merit on their part, is the portion of the saved, and yet it dares to murmur when the matter is to its disadvantage and the reprobate too receive a reward without any desert on their part.[5] A reward is a reward, and the same standard should be applied freely in both cases.

It is scarcely comprehensible how, after such wanderings out of the right path and the exhibition of such mental confusion, Luther could proclaim so loudly the victory of his "*servum arbitrium.*" He describes his proof of the "unchanging, eternal

[1] "*De servo arbitrio,*" p. 712=260.

[2] Thus Kattenbusch, *ibid.*, p. 22, who points out that, according to Luther, "Nothing takes place in the world without God." He concludes (*ibid.*) that "On the whole nothing is gained" by Luther's supposed attempts to relieve God of the responsibility for Adam's Fall.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 709; "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 255.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 730=284: "*Quia incommodum sibi est, hoc iniquum, hoc intolerabile est, hic expostulatur, hic murmuratur, hic blasphematur.*"

and infallible will by which God foresees, orders and carries out all things " as a " thunderbolt " launched against the Erasmic and Popish heresy.

Even the editor of the Weimar edition of the " *De servo arbitrio* " is unable to refrain from remarking in connection with one such passage : " It cannot be denied that this mechanical conception of a God, Who is constantly at work, reeks strongly of pantheism."[1] He also quotes the opinion of Kattenbusch : " Luther occasionally expresses his idea [of God's constant action] very imperfectly." " God becomes to a certain extent the slave of His own Power," and all things " lose their resistance when in His presence." " There is no doubt that the whole conception is strongly impregnated with pantheism."[2] Kattenbusch says further : " Relying on such an argument, Luther could not fail to advocate the view that everything is determined by God, even what has no bearing on morality or religion." Finally he concludes : " We were therefore right in refusing, as we did, to admit that Luther's proposition : ' *Omnia necessario fiunt* ' (p. 134 in the Erl. ed.) applied merely to the domain of morals, as Luther himself tries to make us believe."[3] This subsequent explanation given by Luther is only a fresh proof of his mental confusion. Kattenbusch brings forward other evidences of the conflicting currents in Luther's train of thought ; for instance, in his conception of God and of destiny ; into these we have, however, no time to enter.[4]

The theoretical weakness of Luther's attack on free-will and its manifest bias in his own religious psychology caused the theologian O. Scheel to exclaim regretfully : " Luther impressed a deterministic stamp on the fundamental religious ideas which he put before the world." Luther's determinism was vainly repudiated as a " reformed heresy " by the later Protestants. It is true that Luther based his predestinarian sayings on his " personal experience of salvation, which he felt to have been a free gift," but then his " religious state was not normal," as Kattenbusch already had " rightly pointed out." Luther's doctrine of the distinction between the " *Deus absconditus* " and the " *Deus revelatus* " Scheel ascribes to a false conception of God,[5] though he is inclined to look with favour on Luther's fatalism, finding therein " nothing irreligious," but merely Luther's lively " trust in God " ; he even speaks of the " religious power and truth inherent in this idea."[6]

Under another aspect the work exhibits, better than any other, the undeniable qualities of its writer, the elasticity

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 711, n. 1.
[2] Kattenbusch, *ibid.*, p. 15 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 20. Cp. on the proposition " *omnia necessario fiunt*," above, p. 265, n. 3.
[4] P. 20 ff.
[5] Scheel, *ibid.* (see above, p. 264, n. 3), pp. 211, 529 f., 532, 545. Kattenbusch, *ibid.*
[6] Scheel, *ibid.*, p. 540.

of his mind, his humour and imagination, and his startling readiness to turn every circumstance to advantage ; at the same time, undoubtedly because it was a case of breaking a lance with Erasmus, the style is more polished than usual and the language less abusive. The editor of the Weimar edition speaks of the book as the " most brilliant of Luther's Latin polemics, nay, perhaps the most brilliant of all his controversial works."[1]

Luther would not have committed this great work to writing had not his mind been full of the subject. How far calm deliberation had any place in the matter it is as hard to determine here, as it is in so many of his other productions, where feeling seems to hold the reins. It is likewise difficult to understand how Luther, in practice, managed to compromise with the ideas he expounds, more especially as he was the leader of a movement on the banner of which was inscribed, not the gloomy domination of fatalism, but the amelioration of religious conditions by means of moral effort in all directions. The contradiction between lack of freedom on the one hand, and practice and the general belief in free-will on the other, was a rock which he circumnavigated daily, thanks to his self-persuasion that the strands drawn by the Divine Omnipotence around the will were of such a nature as not to be perceptible and could therefore be ignored. We believe ourselves to be free, and do not feel any constraint because we surrender ourselves willingly to be guided to the right or to the left ; this, however, is merely due to the exceptional fineness of the threads which set the machine in motion.

For an ennobling of human nature and of the Christian state such a system was certainly not adapted. A tragic fate ordained that the apostasy, of which the cause was ostensibly the deepening of religious life and feeling, should bear this bitter fruit. Freedom had been proclaimed for the examination of religious truth, and now, the " submission of every man " is categorically demanded to doctrines opposed to free-will and to the dignity of the Christian. Nevertheless, both then and later, even to the present day, this curious, assertive book, like the somewhat diffident one of Erasmus, to which it was a reply—both of them so characteristic of the mind of their authors—have

[1] P. 211 f.

drawn many to examine the spirit of that age and of its two spokesmen.[1]

In the work "*De servo arbitrio*," Luther speaks of Laurentius Valla as one who had cherished similar views.[2] In his "Table-Talk" he praises his opinions on free-will and the simplicity which he cultivated both in piety and learning. "Laurentius Valla," he says, "is the best 'Wal' [Italian] I have ever come across in my life."[3] Opinions differ widely as to Valla's views, which are expressed with enigmatical obscurity in his Dialogue "*De libero arbitrio*." At a later date Erasmus took his part against Luther, rightly pointing out that Valla was seeking to explain popularly how it is that the Divine foreknowledge does not necessarily make all things happen without freedom and of necessity.[4] Valla was a Humanist and critic, but neither a theologian nor a philosopher. In the question at issue he left the decision to faith, but laid great stress on the objections raised by reason. According to a modern historian he did not deny free-will, but merely left the problem, "which he neither could nor would solve," to the Omnipotence of God.[5]

Luther's Later Dicta on the Enslaved Will and on Predestination

Luther always remained faithful to the position taken up in his great work "*De servo arbitrio*," as to both the absence of freedom and predestination.

[1] Of the more modern works we shall mention only the Catholic one by H. Humbertclaude, "Erasme et Luther," 1910, and the Protestant one by K. Zickendraht, "Der Streit zwischen Erasmus und Luther über die Willensfreiheit," 1909. The latter, though on the whole supporting Luther, cannot help perceiving "the contradictions of the whole work '*De servo arbitrio*'" (p. 130), which led Ritschl, whom Kattenbusch follows, to call it an "unhappy piece of patch-work." Although he characterises Luther's ideas as "wholly the outcome of the Pauline spirit" (p. 134), yet he speaks of "Luther's pantheistic determinism" (p. 197), and avers the "incompatibility" of the monistic pantheism which he finds here with the ethical dualism of his general train of thought (p. 168); the presence of "two contradictory theories" is, according to him, an undoubted "fact" (p. 141).

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 640; "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 162: "*Ex mea parte unus Vuicleff, et alter Laurentius Valla, quanquam et Augustinus quem præteris, meus totus est.*" Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, pp. 101, 103, 107.

[3] "Tischreden," ed. Förstemann, 2, p. 66.

[4] Cp. "Luthers Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 619, n.

[5] Zickendraht, *ibid.*, p. 180 f.

In the Disputations of which we have records, he frequently reverts to his denial of free-will.

In a Disputation of December 18, 1537, for the sake of debate the objection is advanced, that there is no purpose in making good resolutions owing to the will not being free: "Man," says the opposer, "has no free-will, hence he can make no good resolutions, and sins of necessity whether he wishes to or not." The professor's reply runs: "*Nego consequentiam.* Man, it is true, cannot of himself alter his inclination to sin; he has this inclination and sins willingly, neither under compulsion nor unwillingly. Man's will, not God, is the author of sin."[1] On another occasion, on January 29, 1536, the objector refers to the opinions of great Churchmen of olden times, that some freedom of the will exists. The reply is: "What such men say is not to be accepted as gospel-truth; they often gave proof of weakness and stood in need of additional purification by the '*remissio peccatorum.*' You youngsters must not get into the habit of deriding them, yet we esteem Holy Scripture more highly."[2]— In the same year we read the following in the theses of the School: "It is godless philosophy, and censured by theology, to assert that '*liberum arbitrium*' exists in man for the forming of a just judgment and a good intention, or that it is man's business to choose between good and evil, life and death, etc. He who speaks thus does not know what man really is, and does not understand in the least what he is talking about."[3]

Melanchthon, however, found urgent reasons in the growing immorality of the young men at the University and the sight of the evil results in the religious life of the people produced by the new doctrine of the will and good works to revise what he had said on free-will in his "*Loci Theologici.*" In the course of time he took up an altogether different standpoint, coming at last to acknowledge free-will and a certain co-operation with grace ("*Synergismus*").[4] Luther, nevertheless, was loath to break

[1] "Disputationen M. Luthers, 1535–1545," edited for the first time by Paul Drews, Göttingen, 1895, p. 279 f. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 92, n. 29 ff. Drews points out (p. 90) that in the 1538 edition the whole of the theses *De homine* "are, strange to say, omitted." Cp. also "Disputationen," p. 11, n. 29: "*Iustificati autem sic gratis tum facimus opera, imo Christus ipse in nobis facit omnia.*" Also pp. 92, 94, 95, 266, 318, 481. On p. 160 we meet with the drastic expression: The depravation of human nature by original sin is so great, "*ut suspirare ad Deum non possimus, nedum nos explicare aut bonum facere.*" Hence there is an end to our "*liberum arbitrium; sed restituetur nobis in resurrectione mortuorum, ubi rursum collocabimur in paradisum.*"

[4] Cp. Melanchthon's letter to the Elector August of Saxony, which will be given in detail later, where he characterises as "*stoica*" and "*manichœa deliria,*" on the part of Luther, the view that "all works, good and bad, in all men, whether good or bad, happened by necessity." Such mad fancies he had rejected "during Luther's lifetime and afterwards," "Corp. Ref.," 9, p. 766. Likewise, in his "*Responsiones*

with him on account of this divergence in doctrine; out of esteem for so indispensable a fellow-worker, he even recommended to his hearers the new edition of the "*Loci*" without a word about the corrections in question.

But Luther himself never surrendered his favourite idea in spite of his anxiety and horror at the effect his preaching produced on the people, who seized upon his theory of human helplessness and the sole action of grace as a pretext for moral indolence. In 1531 he was again to be heard stating—this time in a public sermon, a very unusual thing—that man lacks free-will. Here he connects this doctrine with the impossibility of "keeping the Commandments without the grace of the Spirit." In Popery they indeed preached, as he himself had also done at one time, "*quod homo habeat liberum arbitrium*," to keep the Commandments by means of his natural powers; but this was an error which had grown up even in the time of the Apostles.[1]—As a matter of fact, however, the Church did not teach that fallen man could, at all times, keep all the Commandments without grace.

When, in August, 1540, someone said to him: "People are merely getting worse through this preaching on grace," he replied: "Still, grace must be preached because Christ has commanded it; and though it has been preached for a long time, yet at the hour of death the people know nothing about it; it is to the honour of God that grace should be preached; and, though we make the people worse, still God's Word cannot be set aside. But we also teach the Ten Commandments faithfully, these must be insisted on frequently and in the right place."[2] The Antinomians had just then attacked the preaching of the Decalogue on the pretext of Luther's own doctrine regarding man's incapacity.

In his "Table-Talk" Luther elsewhere declares it to be his "final opinion" that "whoever defends man's free-will and says that it is capable of acting and co-operating in the very least degree in spiritual matters, has denied Christ."[3] Absolute determinism, or the entire absence of free-will everywhere, is here no longer expressed. "I admit," he says, "that you have free-will for

ad articulos bavaricæ inquisitionis," Melanchthon calls such doctrines "*stoici et manichæi furores*," and adds: "*Oro iuniores, ut fugiant has monstruosas opiniones, quæ sunt contumeliosæ contra Deum et perniciosæ moribus. Nam si omnia necessaria sunt, nihil opus est deliberatione et diligentia. . . . Saepe homines applaudunt monstruosis opinionibus tantum quia monstruosæ sunt et mirantur non intellectas. . . . Firmissima veritas est, Deum nec velle peccata nec impellere voluntates ad peccandum.*" Melanchthon wrote this after Luther had already passed away; he was terrified by the moral results of these "monstrous" doctrines. "Opp.," Witebergæ, 1562, 1, p. 369.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 1, p. 163, in the first and second set of notes on the sermon.

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 177 f., said between August 7 and 24, from notes taken by Mathesius himself.

[3] "Tischreden," "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 222.

milking the cows, for building a house, etc., but not for anything further."[1] Of spiritual things, however, he says: "Man's free-will does not work or do anything towards his conversion . . . but merely suffers and is the material upon which the Holy Ghost works, as the potter fashions the pot out of the clay, doing this even in those who resist and are unruly like Paul. But after the Holy Ghost has worked on such a rebellious will, He renders it pliable so that it wills as He does."[2] The example of those "whose bodies are possessed by the devil, who rends them and drags them about, rides and drives them," he continues, shows how little "man's will can do" for his conversion.[3]—Johann Aurifaber (1566), the old editor of the "Table-Talk," says of Luther's statement, referred to above, concerning his "final opinion": "There you see, dear Christian brother, that it is a lie what some say and give out, more particularly the Synergists, viz.: that the dear Man of God modified in any way his opinion on free-will, which they term hard because it is directly opposed to their heresy. And yet they boast of being Luther's disciples!"[4]

In his own mind Luther practically denied his doctrine as often as he struggled with remorse, or sought to overcome his terrors of conscience. Few men have had to exert their will with such energy (as we shall have occasion to point out later, vol. v., xxxii.) to hold their own against inward unrest. He, the advocate of the servitude of the will, in his struggles with himself and his better feelings, made his soul the battlefield of free-will, i.e. of a will vindicating its freedom.

From his artificial position of security he ventures to stand up vigorously against others, great men even, who "abused" his doctrine. Count Albert of Mansfeld was one of those who, according to Luther's account, said of predestination and the helplessness of the will: "The Gospel? What is predestined must come to pass. Let us then do as we please. If we are to be saved, we shall be saved," etc. Luther, therefore, takes him to account in a letter addressed to him on December 8, 1542. He tells him that he intends to speak freely, being himself "a native of the county of Mansfeld." "He, too, had been tormented with such thoughts or temptations" and had thus been in danger of hell. "For in the case of silly souls such devilish thoughts breed despair and cause them to distrust God's grace; in the case of brave people, they make them contemners and enemies of God, who say: let me alone, I shall do as I

[1] "Tischreden," "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 222.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 224. [3] *Ibid.*, 225. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 222.

please, for in any case all I do is to no purpose." He does not forbear to scold the Count for his behaviour, for "withdrawing himself from the Word and the Sacrament," for "growing cold and set upon Mammon." In the end he is, however, only able to give him the following questionable consolation concerning his doctrine. "It is perfectly true that what God has determined must certainly take place," but there is "a great distinction to be observed" between the revealed and the secret will of God. He should not "trouble himself much" about the latter; for those who do soon "come to care nothing for the Word of God or the Sacrament, give themselves up to a wild life, to Mammon, tyranny and everything evil; for, owing to such thoughts, they can have no faith, hope or charity for either God or man." Instead of this he desires, as he had explained in his book against Erasmus, that we should simply cling to the God Who has revealed Himself; "what He has promised we must believe, and what He has commanded we must do." A servant, for instance, does not presume to seek out "the secret thoughts" of his master before obeying him. "Has not God the same right to secret knowledge of His own beyond what He chooses to tell us?" Some say: If it is to be, then all will happen in any case according to God's will; "of what use, then, is baptism, Holy Scripture and every other creature to us? If God wills it, He can surely do it without all that."[1]

At that time the report of such frivolous talk among the great ones led him to broach the subject in the lectures on Genesis which he happened to be delivering.[2] Here, if we may trust the reporter, he reverts to the doctrine he had defended in his "*De servo arbitrio*," viz. that all things happen of entire necessity ("*esse omnia absoluta et necessaria*").[3] He retracts nothing, but merely says, that he had

[1] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 512 ff.

[2] "Opp. Lat. exeg.," 6, p. 290–300. Cp. on this passage, from a lecture published from notes, Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 2^2, p. 6 f., where he very aptly draws attention to the points which Luther here (as elsewhere) evades: (1) "Whether faith is rendered inwardly possible to every man by the will and action of God?" (2) "Why does God fail to instil faith into so many?" (3) "How is final perseverance assured in the elect?"

[3] "The enigmas of predestination were in his case in the last instance inextricably bound up with deterministic ideas—a fact not unimportant for the fate of his predestinarian ideas, for instance, in the hands of Melanchthon." F. Loofs, "Dogmengesch.," p. 763. *Ibid.*,

emphasised the necessity of paying attention only to the revealed God ; in this artifice he finds a means of preventing any frivolous abuse of the theory of predestination, any despair or recourse to the complaint " I cannot believe."

In another letter he gives encouragement, no less doubtful in character, to an unknown person, who, in the anxiety caused by his apprehension of being predestined to hell, had applied to him. Luther boldly re-affirms the existence of such absolute predestination : " God rejected a number of men and elected and predestined others to everlasting life before the foundation of the world, such is the truth." " He whom He has rejected cannot be saved, even though he should perform all the works of the Saints ; such is the irrevocable nature of the Divine sentence. But do you gaze only upon the Majesty of the Lord Who elects, that you may attain to salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." In Christ, he proceeds, we have that revealed Majesty of God, Who wills to save all who believe in Christ ; " whom He has predestined to salvation, He has also called by the gospel, that he may believe and be justified by faith."[1]— Yet, strangely enough, this letter also contains a sentence which denies absolute predestination to hell, the only such denial known to have been made by Luther.[2] The text of the letter has, however, not yet been verified critically. The words in question appear to be a quotation from Augustine added by another hand in extenuation of Luther's doctrine.

p. 757. " He was convinced that he was merely advocating Paul's doctrine of grace. Yet what he expounds is a deterministic doctrine of predestination which shrinks from no consequences, not even from attributing the Fall directly to God." Loofs points out, that, according to Luther, Adam fell because " the Spirit [of God] did not render him obedient," and quotes the " *De servo arbitrio*," " Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 207 : " *Non potuit velle bonum . . . id est obedientiam, quia spiritus illam non addebat.*" The same author shows (p. 766 f.) how the above ideas remain with Luther even at a later date, and cause him to represent the faith which, in man, is coincident with justification, as " effected by God simply in accordance with His Eternal Providence." " We can, however, understand how Luther, in his sermons to the people, prefers to state the case as though faith were the condition demanded of man for the forgiveness of his sins and the receiving of the Spirit " ; the fact is he " frequently leaves his predestinarian ideas on one side."

[1] " Briefe," ed De Wette, 6, p. 427, no date.

[2] Köstlin, " Luthers Theologie," 2^2, p. 80 f., where he states : " This contradicts all that we otherwise know of him."

Although Luther did not put forth his rigid doctrine of predestination to hell either in his popular or strictly theological writings, yet, to the end of his life, he never surrendered it; that he "never retracted it" is emphasised even in Köstlin and Kawerau's Life of Luther.[1]

Of his book against Erasmus Luther spoke long after as the only one, save the Catechism, which he would be sorry to see perish.[2] In reply to the question put by Caspar Aquila, a preacher, why so many who heard the Word did not believe, he refused to ascribe this to free-will, and as regards the temptations to despair, which the same enquirer complained were the result of his thoughts on predestination, Luther insisted, that God had not chosen to reveal His secret will ("*maiestas lucis illius occultata et non significata est*"), hence the need to turn away resolutely from such thoughts and to defy this "greatest of all temptations, truly a devilish one." He refuses to withdraw even the proposition, that all things happen of necessity.[3] In his later years he is fond of speaking of the power of sin over man's interior, and though he does not allude so decidedly or so frequently to man's "absolute and entire dependence upon God's Omnipotence," yet he has by no means relinquished the idea. Thus the "difference between his earlier and later years" is one only of degree, i.e. he merely succeeded in keeping his theory more in the background.[4]

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 664.

[2] To Capito at Strasburg, July 9, 1537, "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 47: "*Magis cuperem eos (libros meos) omnes devoratos. Nullum enim agnosco meum iustum librum, nisi forte De servo arbitrio et Catechismum.*" In the "Tischreden," ed. Förstemann, 3, p. 418, Luther says, that Erasmus had "not refuted" his work "*De servo arbitrio,*" and would "never be able to do so for all eternity."

[3] To Aquila, October 21, 1528 (?), "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 6. In the Schmalkalden Articles, 1537 (3, 1), Luther asserts that it is utterly erroneous to say "*hominem habere liberum arbitrium faciendi bonum et omittendi malum, et contra omittendi bonum et faciendi malum.*" After enumerating other errors on sin he concludes: "*Talia et similia portenta orta sunt ex inscitia et ignorantia peccati et Christi Servatoris nostri, suntque vere et mere ethnica dogmata, quæ tolerare non possumus. Si enim ista approbantur, frustra Christus mortuus est,*" etc. "Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche," ed. Müller-Kolde[10], p. 311.

[4] Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 2^2, pp. 124 and 82. In the last passage Köstlin attempts to base "Luther's reticence" on a certain "conviction" which he does not describe more particularly and which it is difficult to recognise; he attributes to Luther "a purer, more resigned readiness to listen to the other side." Yet he had remarked

The controversy with Erasmus did not cease with the appearance of Luther's book, on the contrary. Apart from the question itself, the injustice done to the eminent scholar, and still more to the Church, by the arrant perversion of his opponent's words to which Luther descended

previously: "From all that we know with certainty of Luther, it is plain that he stuck to his earlier views as to the hidden God and Divine predestination. Nor does Luther make any attempt to solve the difficulty, which must appear to us a contradiction; he simply discourages reflection on the subject." M. Staube ("Das Verhältnis der menschlichen Willensfreiheit zur Gotteslehre bei Luther und Zwingli," Zürich, 1894) writes with less indulgence than Köstlin on Luther's doctrine. This theologian, an admirer of Zwingli, says bluntly: Luther's doctrine of predestination and the lack of free-will "leads to the destruction of all evangelical belief, not only of the personal assurance of salvation but also of Holy Scripture, which itself knows nothing of an arbitrary and faithless God in the matter of man's salvation" (p. 36). "What then is left of Luther's Deity?" "A Divine Person Who dispenses His grace and mercy according to His mood" (p. 37). "God appears and acts as a blind, naked force, *fortuna, fatum,*" because what He does is "beyond good and evil" (p. 38). "Why invent the fable of God's justice and holiness? . . . We do nothing, God works all in all. . . . This religion, which is the logical outcome of Luther's work '*De servo arbitrio,*' is surely not Christianity but Materialism"; only the name is wanting for morality and law to become "foolish fancies" (p. 39). Diametrically opposed to this are the explanations of certain of Luther's modern theological admirers, who not only pay homage to the author of "*De servo arbitrio*" on account of his true piety, but see in Erasmus's vindication of free-will mere frivolous Pelagianism. Adolf Harnack, in the fourth edition of his "Dogmengeschichte," 3, p. 841, says: "Rightly the '*Diatribe*' is looked upon as the masterpiece of Erasmus, yet it is an altogether secular, and, at bottom, irreligious work. Luther, on the other hand, insists on the fundamental fact of Christian experience. On this rests his doctrine of predestination, which is simply the expression of the Omnipotence of the grace of God." With his doctrine of predestination and the enslaved will, and his treatment of the *Deus absconditus,* he "gave back religion to religion." In the Weimar ed. of Luther's works (18, p. 593), Harnack's opinion is accepted and (p. 595) we are told that Luther "refuted in a masterly fashion the obscure and unintelligible definition given by Erasmus [of free-will]." Luther's work appears to the author of the Preface to the "*De servo arbitrio,*" in this edition, as "a real achievement" (p. 596), and he quotes with satisfaction A. Ritschl's opinion, that Luther, its writer, in his sovereign certainty, did not shrink from the *contradictio in adiecto.* In the "Deutsch-evangel. Blätter" (p. 528, n. 1 [reprint, p. 14]), G. Kawerau states that Luther asserted "with relentless logic man's inability to turn to God, and did not shrink from the harshest predestinarian expressions, phrases, indeed, which gave great trouble to Lutherans at a later date, and which they would gladly have seen expunged from his writings that Calvin's followers might not appeal to them. And yet we agree with Harnack," etc. (then follow Harnack's words as given above). Köstlin concludes: "The death of all religion, as K. Müller ('Kirchengesch.,' 2, p. 307) rightly remarks, is to take our own works and doings into account."

in order to stamp him and the Catholic doctrine of the past as altogether un-Christian, could not be allowed to pass unchallenged. It has been admitted, even by Protestants, as Luther's constant policy in this work to make Erasmus say, that, in order to arrive at salvation it was sufficient to use free-will and that grace was unnecessary, and then to conclude that the Holy Ghost and Christ were shamefully set aside by Catholics. This Luther did (as Kattenbusch says) "by a certain, of course *bona fide*, perversion of his [Erasmus's] words, or by a process of forced reasoning which can seldom, if indeed ever, be regarded as justified."[1]

4. New Views on the Secular Authorities

"Since the time of the Apostles no doctor or scribe, no theologian or jurist has confirmed, instructed and comforted the consciences of the secular Estates so well and lucidly as I have done."[2]

"Even had I, Dr. Martin, taught or done no other good, save to enlighten and instruct the secular government and authorities, yet for this cause alone they ought to be thankful to and well-disposed towards me, for they all of them, even my worst enemies, know that in Popery such understanding of the secular power was not merely discountenanced, but actually trampled under foot by the stinking, lousy priests, monks and mendicant friars."[3]

"In Popery," as hundreds of documents attest, the people were taught, as they always had been, that the secular government was divinely appointed and altogether independent in its own sphere;[4] that it was nevertheless to govern according to the dictates of law and justice; that, far from neglecting it, it was to promote the eternal welfare of the subject; finally, that it was bound to recognise the Catholic Church as the supreme guardian, of both the natural and religious law. Government and secular

[1] Kattenbusch, "Luthers Lehre vom unfreien Willen," p. 28, where in proof of such perversions he refers to "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, pp. 191 *seq.*, 208, 213, 224, 231, 238, 287, 303, 324, 330, 354, adding at the end an "*etc.*" which is full of meaning.

[2] Luther, "Verantwortung der auffgelegten Auffrur," 1533, "Werke," Erl. ed., 31, p. 236. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] The theories of some theologians on the direct authority of the Church to interfere in secular matters do not here come into consideration.

Estate could work in all freedom and prosperity. All that Luther taught rightly concerning the secular power had been proclaimed long before by the voice of the Church and put into practice.[1] As to the new and peculiar doctrines he taught in the first period of his career, they must now be examined.

A curious changeableness and want of logic are apparent, not merely in his way of expressing himself, but also in his views. This was due in part to the fact that his mental abilities lent themselves less to the statement and defence of general theories than to controversy on individual points, but still more to the influence on his doctrine exercised by the changes proceeding in the outer world.

The main point with him in the matter of the secular authorities was, whether they might demand obedience from him and his followers in matters concerning the new doctrine, i.e. whether they might compel them to forsake the innovations, or whether the Lutheran party had the right to resist the authorities and the Emperor, even by the use of force. Another question was whether Catholics could be left free to practise their religion in localities where the authorities were on Luther's side. Were the authorities bound to respect Catholic convictions, or had the Lutheran Prince or magistrate the right to force the refractory to accept the innovations? Finally, Luther's relations with those parties within the new faith who differed from him raised fresh questions: Were the evangelical authorities to tolerate these sectarians, or were they to repress any deviation from the Wittenberg doctrine?

To formulate any definite answers to such questions was rendered still more difficult in Luther's case by the fact that prudence compelled him to exercise great reticence and caution in his utterances on many such points.[2] On the one hand he might easily have spoilt his whole work in the

[1] Fr. v. Bezold says: "Luther claimed the merit of having exalted the true understanding of the secular power in a way that no one else had done since the time of the Apostles. . . . The indefensibility of this and similar claims has long since been demonstrated" ("Kultur der Gegenwart," 2, 5, 1, Berlin, 1908, p. 66).

[2] Some of his reservations were, however, of doubtful practical value. K. Holl, "Luther und das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment," 1911 (p. 1 ff.), shows how Luther urges the secular power to make an end of the "thievery" of the clerics, and how he ascribes to this power the right of summoning Councils, though only "when needful."

eyes of his cautious sovereign had he proclaimed openly the right of his friends among the nobles to resist the Emperor even by force. On the other, many would have been repelled had he laid down the principle of intolerance towards Zwinglians and Anabaptists as strongly at the commencement as he did later. In considering his doctrine concerning the secular authorities and the obedience due to them, we must simply take his utterances in their historical sequence, at the same time keeping a watchful eye on his actual behaviour in which we shall find at once their explanation and justification.[1] Only in this way shall we arrive at a clear estimation of his tangled ideas on secular authority and religious toleration.[2]

As to his varying theories,[3] at the outset and during the first stage of his revolt against the Church, Luther was fond of launching out into very questionable and far-reaching statements concerning the secular authority, as appears, for instance, in his tract addressed in 1520 to the German Nobility. Where the authorities are on the side of the Evangel, their power is so great that they may exercise their office "unhindered," "even against Pope, bishop, parson, monk or nun or whatever else there be"; in that case, too, the secular authorities are perfectly justified in summoning clerics to answer before their tribunal.[4] "St. Paul says to all Christians," Luther argues, "'Let every soul'—hence, I suppose, even the Pope himself—'be subject to higher powers, for they bear not the sword in vain.' . . . St. Peter, too, foretold that men would arise who would despise the temporal rulers, which has indeed come to pass through the rights of the clergy."[5] In such wise does he charge the past.

But now, he continues (owing to his efforts), "the secular power has become a member of the ghostly body, and, though its office is temporal, yet it has been raised to a

[1] This will be done in the present work as occasion arises. See more particularly vol. iii., xv. 2 and 3, and vol. v., xxxv. 1 and 2.

[2] See vol. iv., xxviii.

[3] For a Protestant criticism of them see Erich Brandenburg, "Luthers Anschauung von Staat und Gesellschaft," 1901 ("Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgesch.," Hft. 70), and Karl Müller, "Kirche Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," 1910.

[4] "To the Christian nobility," 1520, "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 409; Erl. ed., 21, p. 284.

[5] *Ibid.*

spiritual dignity; its work may now be done freely and unhindered among all the members of the whole body, punishing and compelling, where guilt deserves it or necessity demands, regardless of Pope, bishop or priest, let them threaten and ban as they please."[1] It is clear how the interests of the "reformation" he has planned impel him to extend the rights of the secular power, even in the spiritual domain, over all who resist.

In his work "On the secular power," of March, 1523, we find an entirely different language.

Here he insists with great emphasis on the fact that the secular authorities have no right to interfere in the spiritual domain. The explanation of his change of attitude is that here he is thinking of the Catholic authorities who were placing obstacles in the way of the spread of the Lutheran apostasy. His teaching is: The secular power exists and is ordained by God, but it has no concern with spiritual matters, may not place difficulties in the way of the preaching of the "Word," and has no right to curtail the interests of the Evangel, by prohibiting Luther's books, by threatening excommunication, or by hindering the new worship. He thus sets up general principles which are quite at variance with the line of action he himself constantly pursued where the authorities were favourable to his cause.

His teaching he expounds in this way: Temporal rulers are, it is true, established in the world by the will of God and must be obeyed; but their sword must not invade a domain which does not belong to them; it is not their business to render men pious, and they have nothing whatever to do with the good, their only object being to prevent outward crimes and to maintain outward peace as "God's task-masters and executioners."[2] He speaks almost as though there were two kingdoms of men, one, of the wicked and those who are not "Christians," coming under the rule of the authorities and belonging to the kingdom of the world; the other, the kingdom of God, whose members are not subject to earthly laws and authorities; such are "all true believers in and beneath Christ."

Not only could this curious dualism be objected to on the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 410=285.

[2] "On the secular power," 1523, "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 268; Erl. ed., 22, p. 89.

score of want of clearness, but the assertion that the secular power was merely an "executioner" for the punishment of outward crime actually tended to abase and degrade it. The olden Church had, on the contrary, exalted the secular power by permitting its representatives to share in many ways in the spiritual work of the Church, and by desiderating the harmonious co-operation of the two powers, spiritual and secular, in the interests of the ultimate end of mankind.

The singular attitude adopted by Luther is to be explained, as hinted above, by the fact that, in his work "On the secular power," he has allowed himself to be so largely influenced by polemical regard for the Catholic authorities, whom he describes as those blind, wretched people, the Emperor and the wise Princes and tyrants generally. He inveighs against the "clever squires who seek to uproot heresy," and against "our Christian Princes, who defend the faith." The authorities with whom he is here concerned consist almost exclusively of persons who, "instead of allowing God's Word to have free course," would fain impose by compulsion the faith of bygone days upon their subjects, thus creating "liars by constraint." They "command men to feel with the Pope," but they act "without the clear Word of God" and must therefore necessarily perish in their "perverted understanding."[1]

In the work in question he nevertheless seeks to establish a general theory, though, partly owing to its being forcibly shaped to meet the special needs of the case, partly because it was based on a certain kind of pseudo-mysticism, the theory remains open to many objections.

The secular power (more particularly where it is Catholic) cannot exercise any authority in spiritual matters, hence, he says, "these two governments must be carefully kept asunder, and both be preserved, the one to render men pious, the other to safeguard outward peace and prevent evil deeds."[2] In speaking as he does here and elsewhere in this work of the "two governments" he is, however, very far from acknowledging an independent ecclesiastical or spiritual government such as had existed in Catholicism. What he called spiritual government was "without law or command," and merely "the inward sovereignty of the Word," "Christ's spiritual dominion" where souls are ruled by the Evangel; there the Word of God is furthered by teaching and the sacraments, by which minds are led and heresy vanquished; "for Christians must be ruled by faith, not by outward works. . . . Those who do not believe are not Christians and do not belong to Christ's kingdom, but to the kingdom of the world, and must therefore be compelled and governed by the sword." "Christians do all what is good without

[1] Cp. *ibid.*, Erl. ed., pp. 83–6, 88, 89, 91–3. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

compulsion and God's Word suffices them."[1]—Hence it is certain that he does not look upon this kingdom of the Christian as a real government, seeing that it implies no jurisdiction. The power to make and enforce laws in this world belongs only to the secular authorities. They alone form on earth a real government. "Priests and bishops," too, have neither "supremacy nor power."[2]

True believers are subject to "no laws and no sword,"[3] for they stand in need of none. For this reason Christ commands us not to make use of the sword and to refrain from violence. "The words of Christ are clear and peremptory: 'resist not evil'" (Matt. v. 39). These words and the whole passage concerning the blow on the cheek, the Sophists (i.e. the Schoolmen) had indeed interpreted as a mere "counsel." In reality, however, they constitute a command, though only for "Christians"; "the sword has no place among Christians, hence you cannot use it upon or among Christians, since they need it not."[4] He is here addressing Duke Johann, the Elector's brother, who sympathised with his cause and to whom, in the Preface, the work is dedicated. He goes on to tell him that the Christian ruler nevertheless must not lay aside the sword on account of what has just been said, for in point of fact there are few such "Christians," wherefore the sword was still "useful and necessary everywhere." "The world cannot and will not do without" authority. Even with the sword you still remain "true to the gospel," he tells this Christian Prince, and still hold fast to Christ's Word, "so that you would gladly offer the other cheek to the smiter and give up your cloak after your coat, if the matter affected yourself or your cause."[5] Every Christian likewise must comply with the

[1] Cp. *ibid.*, Erl. ed., p. 94.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 93. Whereas Luther's other ideas to be described changed considerably in later years, this one of an "abrogated spiritual government" always remained, though with some modifications. According to the Preface to his "Instruction for Visitations" (1528) and the "Instruction" itself, "the visitors have of themselves no official public authority for holding the Visitation, but must be conversant with the Bible, find therein their qualification and be appointed by the Elector, in the name of the preachers, to hold the Visitation. In this quality they are unable to exercise any sort of force or compulsion, this being reserved to the Elector, but, as representing him, they also share in his secular power." "It is part of the duty of the authorities" to "establish and regulate the Matrimonial Courts"; the secular authorities are bound where the work of the pastors has been of no avail, to take their "own means for the spiritual and temporal protection of the Christianity of the country, against scandal and false doctrine," and to make God's Word the only public and authorised code and authority. For the spiritual government consists exclusively "in the Word and the preaching-office, and can only penetrate into the heart by means of the Word and the work of the pastor." Karl Müller thus sums up the teaching of the documents in question in "Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," 1910, p. 74 f.

[3] "Werke," *ibid.*, p. 69.

[4] "Werke," *ibid.*, p. 72 f.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

command to relinquish his rights, "allow himself to be insulted and disgraced," but in his neighbour's cause he must insist upon what is just, even to having recourse to the sword of authority.[1]

In this way he fancies, as he says in the Dedication, that he is the first to instruct "the Princes and secular authorities to remain Christians with Christ as their Lord, and yet not to make mere counsels out of Christ's commands"; but the "Sophists" "have made a liar of Christ and placed Him in the wrong in order that the Princes may be honoured. . . . Their poisonous error has made its way throughout the world, so that everyone looks upon Christ's teaching as counsels for the perfect and not as obligatory commands, binding on all."

Should the secular power exceed its limits and the rulers demand what is against conscience, then God is to be obeyed rather than man.[2] He now comes to the new Evangel. If the authorities require you "to believe this or the other," "or order you to put away certain books, you must reply, . . . In this respect you are acting like tyrants; you are going too far and commanding where you have neither right nor power, etc. Should they thereupon seize your property and punish you for your disobedience, you should esteem yourself happy and thank God."[3] In the County of Meissen, in Bavaria, and in the March, where the authorities required, under penalties, that his translation of the New Testament should be given up, he says, "the subjects are not to surrender a single leaflet, nor even a letter, if they do not wish to imperil their salvation, for whoever does such a thing, surrenders Christ into the hands of Herod." They are, however, not to offer violent resistance, but to "suffer."[4]

The Imperial Edicts issued against the innovations led him to speak more fully of the interference of the secular authorities on behalf of religious doctrine generally. "God," he declares, "will permit none to rule over the soul but Himself alone. . . . Hence, when the secular power takes upon itself to make laws for the soul it is trespassing upon God's domain and merely seducing and corrupting souls. We are determined to make this so plain that everyone can grasp it, and that our squires, Princes and bishops may see what fools they are when with laws and commandments they try to force the people to believe this or that."[5] Such meddling of the authorities with matters which did not

[1] A Utopian idealism, certainly unknown in the earlier ages, is apparent in the following, taken from Luther's writing referred to above: "A Christian must be ready to suffer all kinds of evil and injustice . . . and not to defend himself before the law. . . . But in the case of others he may and ought to seek for revenge, justice, protection, and assistance, and do his best to this end according as he is able. The authorities, therefore, ought, either of their own initiative or at the instigation of others, to help and protect him without any complaining, appealing, or effort on his part. But where this is not done he must allow himself to be fleeced and oppressed and not offer any resistance, according to the words of Christ" (p. 78).

[2] Cp. *ibid.*, p. 87 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

concern them was, so he says, due to the "commandments of men," and was therefore utterly at variance with "God's Word." God would have "our faith founded only on His Divine Word," but what the worldly authorities were after "was uncertain, or rather, certainly, displeasing [to God], because there was no clear Word of God in its favour." "Such things are enjoined by the devil's apostles, not by the Church, for the Church commands nothing save when she knows for certain that it is according to the Word of God. . . . As for them, they will find it a hard job to prove that the decrees of the Councils are the Word of God."[1]

It is well worth our while to consider the following general grounds he assigns for his repudiation of all interference of the authorities in matters of faith, for, not long after, his position will be very different. He declares that, speaking generally, the authorities have "no power over souls"; the soul is removed altogether from the hands of men and "placed in the hands of God alone." The ruler has just as little control over a soul as he has over the moon. "Who would not be accounted crazy who commanded the moon to shine at his pleasure?" Besides, Pope, Bishops and Schoolmen are "without God's Word," "and yet they wish to be termed Christian Princes, which may God prevent!" Further proofs follow from the Bible, where we read, that God alone knows and governs all things, and from the fact, that "every man's salvation depends on his belief, and he must accordingly look to it that he believes aright"; "faith is a voluntary act to which no one can be forced, nay, it is a Divine work of the Spirit." Moreover, "it is a vain and impossible thing" to compel the heart, and God will bring to a dreadful pass the purblind rulers who are now attempting it.[2]

His conclusion is that "the secular power must be content to wait and allow people to believe this or the other as they please and are able, and not to compel any man by force."[3]

"Heresy can never be withstood by force," he says further on. "Something else is needed. . . . God's Word must here do the work, and if it fails, then the secular power will certainly not achieve it, though it should fill the world with blood. . . . God's Word alone can be effective." Hence the squires should learn at last to cease "destroying 'heresy,' and allow God's Word which enlightens the heart" to have its way.[4]

Nevertheless, he admits that it is the right of the bishops to "restrain heretics." "The bishops must do this, for it appertains to their office though not to the Princes"—a theory which Luther persistently refused to see carried to its logical conclusion. He also admits, that "no one has a right to command souls unless he knows how to show them the way to heaven,"—though here, again, he would have denied the consequence which Catholics gathered from this truth, when they urged that the measures

[1] Cp. *ibid.*, p. 83.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 84 ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 85.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 90 f.

adopted by the Empire against the innovations were for the safeguarding of the road to heaven, which an infallible Church points out to mankind. In Luther's opinion there no longer existed any Church able to "point out the way to heaven" without danger of error. "This no man can do," he exclaims in the same passage,[1] "but God alone." It was hopeless for Catholics to argue that the Church did so only in God's name, and under explicit promise of His assistance. Facts are there to prove that, at the very time when Luther was proclaiming his theories of religious toleration, he was setting them at nought in the most outrageous fashion where Catholics were concerned; he was, however, careful to veil his invitation to abolish their faith and worship under the specious pretext of demolishing abuses, sacrilege and the Kingdom of Antichrist. Nor was it long before he invoked the help of the secular power against sectarians within his own camp.

Where, towards the close of the work "On the secular power," Luther passes on to show how Princes, who are "desirous of acting as Christian Princes and lords," ought to administer their authority, he reaches a less controversial subject and is able to expound in that popular, imaginative language which he knew so well how to handle certain wholesome views which had already found expression in earlier times. In the forcible exhortations he here gives, rulers desirous of profiting might have found much to learn. Whoever wishes to be a Christian Prince must above all "lay aside the notion that he is to rule and govern by violence." "Justice must reign at all times and in everything." His whole mind must be set on "making himself of use and service to his subjects." Secondly, "he must keep an eye on the Jacks-in-office and on his councillors, and behave towards them in such a way as not to despise any of them, while at the same time not confiding in any one man to such an extent as to leave everything to him." "Thirdly, he must take care to deal rightly with evil-doers." "He must not follow those advisers and fire-eaters who urge and tempt him to make war." "Fourthly—what ought really to have been placed first— . . . the ruler must behave towards his God as a Christian, submitting himself to Him with entire confidence, and praying for wisdom to rule well."[2]

Concerning the latter point, viz. the attitude of the ruler towards God and towards religion, which, according to Luther, really should come first, the exhortations of earlier days addressed to the rulers, hardly ever failed to represent the protection of the Kingdom of God as the noblest task of any sovereign, who looked beyond temporal things to the world to come. Luther himself at a later period commends the protection and extension of the Kingdom of God most earnestly and eloquently to all rulers who followed the new faith, and instances the example of the Jewish

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 268 f.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 90.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 94 ff.

Kings and Jewish priesthood.[1] Here, however, where he is full of other interests, we find not a word of the kind. On the subject of their relation to God, all he does is to remind the Princes in one sentence of the need of "true confidence and heartfelt prayer," and, having done so, he breaks off and hurriedly brings the work to an end. In this circumstance, in itself insignificant, Luther's violent breach with tradition is very apparent. Here, where, for the first time in any work of his, he puts forth his views as to what the conduct of secular authorities should be, in dealing with their relations to faith and worship, he has not a word in support of the recommendation to protect religion, albeit so justifiable and hitherto so usual; he could not give such a recommendation, because a few pages before he had laid it down that "the secular government has laws which do not extend beyond life and property and what is external on earth." "The secular power must leave people free to believe this or that as they please"; "the blind, miserable wretches [the Catholic Princes] see not how vain and impossible a thing they are undertaking."[2]—Nowhere in the writing, as a Protestant theological critic remarks, "does the idea appear that a Christian ruler has the right or the duty to pass beyond the limits of his temporal jurisdiction and to concern himself with ecclesiastical matters."[3]

It is quite remarkable how Luther reduces the action of the secular power and the rights of the authorities to a judicial constraint to be exercised against evil-doers, or, as he says, to the task of a mere executioner.

For the explanation of these ideas on the secular power, two points are of especial importance: In the first place, Luther was at that time somewhat disappointed with the Princes and the nobles. In his work "To the Nobility" he had urged them to make an end of the Papal rule, and now he was vexed to see that, almost to a man, they had

[1] "The main work which Luther required of the Princes has always been regarded by Lutheran rulers as their first duty, viz. to be the guardians and protectors of the Evangel and the true faith in their lands, to repress all public evil and falsehood and to provide for the regular ministry of the Word." Karl Müller, "Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," p. 81 f.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., p. 85.

[3] P. Drews, as above, p. 193, n. 2, p. 74. Drews adds: "But it would be premature to conclude from the above that this thought, because not expressed here, is altogether excluded." Yet it would appear to be excluded by the reference to the bishops, who alone were to trouble themselves concerning any danger to the Church through heresy (p. 301). How Luther, nevertheless, makes the duty of the Lutheran rulers to protect religion the foundation first of his practice, and then of his theory, is shown in the next section, also in vol. iii., xv. 2, and vol. v., xxxv. 2.

declined to do anything, whilst he himself was under the ban of the Empire. Secondly, it was his idea of the inward action of the Evangel upon souls and his conception of a sort of invisible Church, which induced him to exclude altogether the secular power from the spiritual domain, and to speak in exaggerated and disparaging terms of the "outward actions" with which alone it was concerned. In those years, when he was still to some extent under the influence of his early pseudo-mysticism, he was fond of picturing to himself the community of believers as an assembly of all those who had been awakened by "the Word," and who, in spirit, were far above the compulsion of any earthly regulations. Thus, with him, the Church, in comparison with the political community, tended to evaporate into a mere union of souls, scarcely perceptible to earthly eyes.[1]

To us now it is clear that, in spite of every effort to the contrary, the new Church was bound in process of time to become entirely dependent on the secular power, first and foremost in its outward administration. Luther's spiritual Church could not endure but for the support of the authorities.

It is notorious that the tendency to make his Church depend upon the secular authorities, as soon as they had embraced his cause, was part of Luther's plan from the very outset. A State Church corresponded with his requirements. However much at the commencement Luther might emphasise the congregational ideal, tracing the whole authority of the freshly formed communities back to it, viz. to the priestly powers inherent in all the faithful, yet, as occasion arises, he falls back on the one external authority left standing, now that he has definitely set aside one of the two powers recognised of old.

In the sixteenth century the Church was confronted not only by official Protestantism, but by various other opposing bodies, Anabaptists, fanatics and anti-Trinitarians. If among all these only the Wittenberg, Zürich and Geneva groups "were able to assert themselves, this," says a recent Protestant theologian, Paul Wernle, "was not due, or at least not solely due, to the fact, that they were more true or more profound than the others, but that they accommo-

[1] See above, p. 104 ff.

dated themselves better to existing conditions, and, above all, to the State."[1] Karl Sell, a Protestant professor of theology, speaks in the same strain: "Where the Reformation gained the day it did so with the help of the secular power, of the Princes or republics and, in every instance, the Reformation itself strengthened the power of these authorities. Upon them devolved the new office of caring . . . for religion. . . . Thus the duty of providing for wholesome doctrine and right faith, for *the* doctrine which alone could be pleasing to God, became one of the principal concerns of the rulers; hence arose the strict adherence to orthodoxy, the exclusion of erroneous teaching from the confines of the State, in short, the theological police system which prevailed in all Protestant countries till the middle of the seventeenth century."[2]

The tendency to seek an alliance with the secular powers did not, however, hinder Luther from degrading the authorities and the Princes in the eyes of the people in the most relentless and public manner. In his mortification at the want of response to his call he allowed himself to be carried away to strictures and predictions which greatly excited the masses.

In his work "On the secular power" he asks: "Would you learn why God has decreed such a terrible fate to befall the worldly Princes?" His answer is: "God has delivered them up to a perverted mind and means to make an end of them, just as in the case of the clerical Princes. . . . Secular lords should rule over the land and the people in outward matters. This they neglected. All they could do was to rob and oppress the people, heaping tax upon tax and rate upon rate." He reminds his readers that the Romans, too, acted unjustly in things both spiritual and temporal—until "they were destroyed. There now! there you see God's judgment on the great braggarts."[3]—"There are few Princes," he says, in the same writing, "who are not regarded as either fools or knaves. This is because they prove themselves to be such, and the common people are growing to understand it; scorn for Princes, which God calls '*contemptum*,' prevails among the peasants and common folk; and I fear there will be no stopping this unless the Princes behave as

[1] "Die Renaissance des Christentums im 16. Jahrhundert," 1904, p. 36.

[2] "Der Zusammenhang von Reformation und politischer Freiheit" ("Theolog. Arbeiten aus dem rhein. wiss. Predigerverein," N. F., Hft. 12, Tübingen, 1910, pp. 44–79, 54).

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 22, p. 86 *seq.*

beseems Princes and begin again to govern reasonably and justly. Your tyranny and wantonness cannot be endured much longer."[1] His chief grievance here and elsewhere is, that the rulers do not allow the gospel to be freely preached, but their "dancing, hunting, races, games and such-like worldly pleasures" he also holds up to execration. "Who does not know that in heaven a Prince is like a hare?" i.e. it would take many beaters to locate one.[2] "I do not say these things in the hope that the secular Princes will profit"; it is not indeed absolutely impossible for a Prince to be a good Christian, "but such a case is rare." A Prince who is at the same time a Christian is "one of the greatest wonders and a most precious sign of the potency of Divine Grace."[3]—It has been already pointed out that, in seeking the causes of the Peasant-War, we must take into account these inflammatory discourses of Luther's to the people and his imperious demand for freedom to preach the "Evangel."

In his "Exhortation to Peace" of the year 1525, he addresses "the Princes and Lords," spiritual and temporal, and tells them they have themselves to blame for the seditious risings of the peasants: "We have no one on earth to thank for such disorder and revolt but you, Princes and Lords, and more particularly you, blind bishops and mad priests"; you are not merely enemies of the Evangel, but "rob and tax in order to live in luxury and state, until the poor, common people neither can nor will bear it any longer. The sword is at your throat," etc.; here he is speaking to the "tyrannical and raging authorities," as he terms them, of that sword which, according to the words he had flung among the people in earlier years, had long been unsheathed.[4]—To Frederick his Elector he had written, on March 7, 1522, that the Princes who were hostile to the Evangel did not see that they were "forcing the people to rebel, and behaving as though they wished themselves or their children to be exterminated; this, without a doubt, God will send as a punishment."[5]

How Luther was wont to criticise the authorities in his sermons, regardless of the effect it might produce in such a period of excitement, appears from a sermon preached on August 20, 1525, i.e. at the time of the great peasant rising in Germany.

"Let anyone count up the Princes and rulers who fear God more than man. How many do you think they will number? You could write all their names on one finger, or as someone has said, on a signet ring."[6] "At the Courts nowadays infidelity, egotism and avarice prevail among the Princes and their councillors . . . they say: my will be done and forget that there is a God in heaven above."[7] "These braggarts and great lords think they are always in the right, and want others to give judg-

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 22, p. 92.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 97. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 293; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 273.
[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 111 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 298).
[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 359.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 361.

ment and pass sentence as pleases them. If this is not done, woe betide the judge."[1]

In the same sermon, it is true, Luther quotes, happily and at the same time forcibly, passages from Holy Scripture in praise of good rulers. In his popular style he points out what should be the qualities of a righteous sovereign who is solicitous for his people's welfare. Such a ruler, he says, is courageous and determined in dealing with evil of every sort, and says to himself: "Even though this rich, powerful, strong man, be he Jack or peer, becomes my enemy, I don't care. By virtue of my office and calling I have one on my side who is far stronger, more respected and more powerful than he, and though he [the enemy] should have all the devils, Princes and Kings on his side, all worse than himself, what is all that to me if He Who sits up there in Heaven is with me? All undertakings should be decided in this way, and one should say: Dear Lord, I leave it in Thy hands, though it should cost me my life. Then God answers: Be steadfast and I will also stand by you." Luther nevertheless concludes: "But where will you find such rulers? Where are they?"[2] In his sermon of December 3, likewise, he had drawn a beautiful picture of the modesty and renunciation which the example of Christ teaches both Princes and people. Yet there again, at the conclusion, we find him saying: "There is no kingdom that is not addicted to plunder. The Princes are a gang of cut-purses."[3]

In the writing "On the secular power," to which we must here revert, Luther says, that the Princes are, as a rule, "the biggest fools or the worst knaves on the surface of the earth"; a good Prince "had always been a rare bird from the beginning of the world." Because the world is "of the devil," therefore "its Princes too are of a like nature." In spite of this Luther ends by saying, that as God's "hangmen," the Princes ought to be obeyed.[4] Later on he was to declare that the passages from the Bible, which he had here quoted in support of this obedience, were his best defence against the charge of diminishing the respect due to Princes, or of teaching rebellion. "The fact that, in that work, I based and confirmed the temporal supremacy and obedience on Scripture is of itself sufficient refutation of such slanders."[5]

When he asserts in the above writing, that "Among

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 357.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 358. [3] *Ibid.*, 17, 1, p. 478.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 22, pp. 89, 90.
[5] "Widder den Radschlag der Meintzischen Pfafferey" (1526), "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 278.

Christians no authority can or ought to exist, but that everyone should be subject to all,"[1] his intention was not, as has sometimes been erroneously supposed by his opponents, to incite the people against the secular power; the words, though badly chosen, must be understood in connection with his mystical theory of the true believers, i.e. of the invisible Church, being intended to convey, that no authority should rule by enforced commands, but that, on the contrary, all must 'serve,' and that even superiors should be mindful of their duty of 'service.' It is not, however, very surprising that such a statement, so unwisely expressed in general terms as that, "among Christians there neither can nor ought to be any authority," when taken out of its context and published abroad among the people, was misapplied by the malcontents, more especially when taken in conjunction with other questionable utterances of Luther's.

His experience with the fanatics, and, still more, the events of the Peasant-War, caused Luther to dwell more and more strongly on the duty and right of the authorities to exercise compulsion towards evil-doers.[2]

In the work "Against the Heavenly Prophets," the first published in the stormy year 1525, he says: "The principal thing" required to protect the people against the devils who were teaching through the mouths of the Anabaptist prophets was, "in the case of the common people," compulsion by the sword and by law. The authorities must force them to be at least "outwardly pious" (true Christians, of course, do all of themselves); the law with its penalties rules over them in the same way that "wild beasts are held in check by chains and bars, in order that outward peace may prevail among the people; for this purpose the temporal authorities are ordained, and it is God's will that they be honoured and feared."[3] The change in his views concerning the treatment of sectarians and heretics will, however, be considered elsewhere.[4]

On the other hand, it must be pointed out here that he at least allows the supreme secular power such authority as

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 22, p. 93.
[2] With regard to the peasants, compare the passages quoted above, p. 217.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 29, p. 140.
[4] Cp. particularly vol. vi., xxxviii.

to deprecate any armed resistance to it, even where the Evangel is oppressed. In his work "On the secular power" we find him stating: "I say briefly that no Prince may make war on his over-Lord, such as the King, or the Emperor, or any other feudal superior, but must allow him to seize what he pleases. For the higher authorities must not be resisted by force, but merely by bringing them to a knowledge of the truth. If they are converted, it is well; if not, you are free from blame, and suffer injustice for God's sake."[1]—As early as 1520 we find him saying: "Even though the authorities act unjustly God wills that they should be obeyed without deceit, unless, indeed, they insist publicly on the doing of what is wrong towards God or men; for to suffer unjustly harms no man's soul, indeed is profitable to it."[2] At the outset he persisted in dissuading Princes favourable to his cause from armed resistance to the Emperor.

His earlier unwillingness, however, only contrasts the more strangely with his later attitude, particularly after the Diet of Augsburg, when his position had become stronger and when danger appeared to threaten the new Evangel from the Imperial power, even though all the Emperor's steps were merely in accordance with the ancient laws of the Empire. Addressing the protesting Princes, he tells them they must act as so many Constantines in defence of their cause, and not wince at bloodshed in order to protect the Evangel against the furious, soul-destroying attacks of the new Licinii. His change of front in thus inciting to rebellion he covered, by declaring he was most ready to render to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, but that when the Emperor forbade "what God in His Word [according to Luther's interpretation] had taught and commanded," then he was going beyond his province; in such a case it was well to remember that "God still retained what was His," "and that they, the tyrants, had lost everything and suffered shipwreck."[3] In this case the action taken by the temporal power according to law must, he says, be forcibly frustrated by the subject. New theories as to the rights of the

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 22, p. 100 f.

[2] In the "Sermon on Good Works," to Duke Johann of Saxony, "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 259; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 198.

[3] In a sermon of 1532 in the "Hauspostille," "Werke," Erl. ed., 3^2, p. 182.

Emperor and the Princes did their part in justifying these demands in his eyes. "Gradually," says Fr. von Bezold, "his experience of the limitations of the Imperial power and the liberty of the Princes of the Empire brought about a change in him. Thus he became . . . the father of the doctrine of the right of resistance."[1]

In 1522 he had written in quite a different strain to his Elector. At that time the critical question of the latter's attitude towards the Imperial authority and of the protection to be afforded Luther against the Emperor was under discussion. "In the sight of men it behoves Your Electoral Highness to act as follows: As Elector to render obedience to the power established and allow His Imperial Majesty to dispose of life and property in the towns and lands subject to Your Electoral Highness, as is right and in accordance with the laws of the Empire; nor to oppose or resist, or seek to place any obstacle or hindrance in the way of the aforesaid power should it wish to lay hands on me or kill me. . . . If Your Electoral Highness were a believer, you would see in this the glory of God, but since you are not yet a believer, you have seen nothing so far."[2] This, compared to the summons to resistance, spoken of above, reads like an invitation to submit with entire patience to those who were persecuting the Evangel. It is true that the then position of affairs to some extent explains the case. The writer was well aware that the Elector might be relied upon to protect him, he also knew that a little temporary self-restraint in his demands would do his cause no harm, and that a profession of entire readiness to sacrifice himself would be most conducive to his interests.[3]

But from this time the opinion that, in the pressing interests of the gospel, it was permissible to make use of violence against the authorities and their worldly regulations, breaks out repeatedly, and, in spite of the reticence he frequently displays and of his warnings against rebellion and revolt, he is quite unable to conceal his inner feeling. Many passages of an inflammatory character have already been instanced above and might be cited here.[4]

[1] "Kultur der Gegenwart," p. 85, see above, p. 295, n. 1.
[2] To the Elector Frederick, March 5, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 108 f. ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 296).
[3] See above, pp. 1–4, 20 f., 24, 101. [4] Cp. p. 190, n. 3.

The opposition smouldering in his breast to the conduct of the authorities in the matter of religious practices differing from their own, comes out very strongly at an early period. Though he declared that he had no wish to interfere, yet, even in 1522, he requested Frederick the Elector of Saxony, through the intermediary of Spalatin,[1] to have Masses prohibited as idolatrous, "an interference in religious matters on the part of the authorities," as Fr. Paulsen remarks, "which it is difficult to reconcile with the position which Luther assigns to them in 1523 in his work 'On the secular power.'"[2] Paulsen also recalls the statement (above, p. 300) that a sovereign may not even order his subjects to surrender the book of the gospels, and that whoever obeyed such an order was handing over Christ to Herod. It is true, he concludes, that here the order would have emanated from "Popish authorities."

When the Canons of Altenburg, in accordance with their chartered rights, wished, in 1522, to resist the appointment of a Lutheran preacher in that town, neither olden law nor the orders of the authorities availed anything with Luther, as we shall see below (p. 314 ff); "against this [the introduction of the Evangel] no seals, briefs, custom or right are valid," he writes; it was the duty of the Elector "as a Christian ruler to encounter the wolves." Finally, we have the outburst: "God Himself has abrogated all authority and power where it is opposed to the Evangel, 'we must obey God rather than men'" (Acts v. 29).[3]

Here we have a practical commentary on what he says when speaking of the "Word" which must make its way alone: "The Word of God is a sword, is destruction, vexation, ruin, poison, and as Amos says, like a bear in the path and a lioness in the wood."[4]

Even in his sermon on Good Works in 1520 he had made a remarkable application of the above principle of the abrogation of all authority in the case of those who ruled in defiance of God: People must not, he declares in ac-

[1] N. Paulus, "Protestantismus und Toleranz im 16. Jahrh.," 1911, p. 4. Cp. p. 327.

[2] "Gesch. des gelehrten Unterrichtes," 1^2, 1896, p. 209.

[3] To the Elector Frederick of Saxony, May 8, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 134 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 356).

[4] To Spalatin, 1520, soon after February 18 ("Briefwechsel," 2, p. 328).

cordance with Acts v. 29, allow themselves to be forced to act contrary to God's law; "If a Prince whose cause is obviously unjust wishes to make war, he must not be followed or assisted, because God has commanded us not to kill our neighbour or to do him an injury."[1] A Protestant theologian and historian of Luther remarks on this: "Luther does not, however, explain how far the responsibility, right and duty of the subject extends, and clearly had not given this matter any careful consideration."[2]

A want of "consideration" may be averred by the historian concerning all Luther's theoretical statements on secular authority during the first period of his career. The historian will find it impossible to discover in Luther's views on this subject the thread which, according to many modern Protestant theologians, runs through his new theories. Wilhelm Hans, a Protestant theologian, was right when he wrote in 1901: "Luther's lack of system is nowhere more apparent than in his views concerning the authorities and their duty towards religion. The attempt to sum up in a logical system the ideas which he expressed on this subject under varying circumstances and at different times, and to bring these ideas into harmony with his practice, will ever prove a failure. It will never be possible to set aside the contradictions in his theory, and between his theory and his practice."[3]

5. How the New Church System was Introduced

A complete account of the introduction of the new ecclesiastical system will become possible only when impartial research has made known to us more fully than hitherto the proceedings in the different localities according to the records still extant.

Some districts were thrown open to the new Evangel without any difficulty because the inhabitants, or people of influence, believed they would thus be bringing about a reformation in the true sense of the word, i.e. be contributing to the removal of ecclesiastical abuses deplored by themselves and by all men of discernment.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 206; Weim. ed., 6, p. 265.
[2] J. Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 1^2, p. 274.
[3] "Gutachten und Streitschriften über das ius reformandi des Rates vor und während der Einführung der offiziellen Kirchenreform in Augsburg, 1534–1537" (Augsburg, 1901, p. 73 f.).

In the opinion of many, to quote words written by Döllinger when yet a Catholic, "there was on the one side a large body of prelates, ecclesiastical dignitaries and beneficiaries who, too well-provided with worldly goods, lived carelessly, troubling themselves little about the distress and decay of the Church, and even looking with complacent indolence at the stormy attacks directed against her; on the other side stood a simple Augustinian monk, who neither possessed nor sought for what those men either enjoyed in plenty or were striving to obtain, but who, for that very reason, was able to wield weapons not at their command; to fight with spirit, irresistible eloquence and theological knowledge, with invincible self-confidence, steadfast courage, enthusiasm, yea, with the energy of a will called to dominate the minds of men and gifted with untiring powers for work. Germany was at that time still virgin soil; journalism was yet unknown; little, and that of no great importance, had as yet been written on subjects of public and general interest. Higher questions which might otherwise have engrossed people's minds were not then mooted, thus people were all the more open to religious excitement, while at the same time the nation, as yet unaccustomed to pompous declamation and exaggerated rhetoric, was all the more ready to believe every word which fell from the lips of a man who, as priest and professor of theology at one of the Universities, had, at the peril of his life, raised the most terrible charges against the Church, charges too which on the whole met with comparatively little contradiction. His accusations, his appeals to a consoling doctrine, hitherto maliciously repressed and kept under a bushel, he proclaimed in the most forcible of language, ever appealing to Christ and the gospel, and ever using figures from the Apocalypse to rate the Papacy and the state of the Church in general, figures which could not fail to fire the imagination of his readers. Luther's popular tracts, which discussed for the first time the ecclesiastical system as a whole, with all its defects, were on the one hand couched in biblical phraseology and full of quotations and ideas from Holy Scripture, while at the same time they were the work of a demagogue, well aware of the object in view, and perfectly alive to the weaknesses of the national character. His writings could equally well be discussed in the tap-rooms and market-places of the cities or preached from the pulpits. Even more efficacious than the methods employed in propagating it were the motives embodied in the system itself; the doctrines—brought before the people in so many sermons, hymns and tracts—on justification without any preparation, by the mere imputation of the sufferings and merits of Christ, were sweet, consoling and welcome. . . . Then there was the new Christian freedom . . . the abolition of the obligation to confess, to fast, etc. 'Oh, what a grand doctrine that was,' Wicel wrote at a later date, 'not to be obliged to confess any more, nor to pray, nor to fast, nor to make offerings or give alms. . . . You ought surely to have been able to catch two German lands, not one only, with such bait,

and to have dragged them into your net. For if you give a man his own way, it is easy to convert him.' "[1]

Altenburg, Lichtenberg, Schwarzburg, Eilenburg

When the first preacher of the Lutheran faith at Altenburg in the Saxon Electorate, Gabriel Zwilling, a former comrade of Carlstadt's, began to behave in too violent and arrogant a manner, Luther, out of consideration for his sovereign, admonished him to "lay aside all presumption" and to "leave God to do everything." "You must not press for innovations, but, as I besought you once before, free consciences by means of the Word alone, and by exhorting to pure faith and charity. . . . I gave my word to the Prince that you would do this, so don't act otherwise and bring shame on me, upon yourself and the Evangel. You see the people running after external things, sacraments and ceremonies; this you must oppose and make an end of; see that you lead them first to faith and charity in order that by their fruits they may show themselves to be a branch of our Vine."[2]

As, however, the gentle methods which Luther had promised his Elector to employ did not appear to suffice, recourse was had to force. The town-council, with the support of the inhabitants of Wittenberg, boldly threw law and custom overboard.

Prejudiced in favour of Luther, they had invited him to visit Altenburg and to preach there, and he had agreed. On that occasion Luther had recommended Gabriel Zwilling to the magistracy as resident preacher, in spite of the Anabaptist tendencies he had already shown. The Canons, who were faithful to the Church and who for centuries had the gift of the livings, opposed the appointment of Zwilling to one of the parishes. Thereupon the town-council, in a complaint composed by Luther himself, declared that, as the natural and duly appointed senate of the congregation, it had the right to decide; that the councillors were, by virtue of their office, not merely responsible for the secular government, but also were bound by the duty of "fraternal Christian charity" to interfere on behalf of the Evangel.

[1] "Luther, eine Skizze," reprinted in Wetzer and Welte, "Kirchenlexikon," 8^2, col. 319 f.

[2] On May 8, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 357.

The council, or rather Luther, also pointed out, that according to Matthew vii. every man has the right to drive away ravening wolves, that the Canons with the Provost at their head were indeed such, not having scrupled to appropriate the revenues, whilst all the while teaching false doctrine; "Scripture does not give power to a '*Concilium*,' but to each individual Christian to judge of doctrine, to detect the wolves and to avoid them. . . . Each one must believe for himself and be able to distinguish between true and false doctrine."[1] Luther here at one and the same time, because it happens to serve his purpose, advocates an extravagant religious freedom, manifestly inconsistent with any religious commonwealth, and yet denies the unfortunate Canons any liberty whatsoever: "They must either hold their tongues or teach the pure Evangel"—or else depart elsewhere.

Luther supported the manifesto in a letter addressed to the Elector in which he declares, that, "God Himself has abrogated all authority and power where it opposes the gospel,"[2] though he does not say who is to decide whether anyone may quote the gospel in his own favour, and what is to be done if the authorities themselves assume the right of "deciding in matters of doctrine."

The Provost of the Canons, in the matter of the appointment, represented the lawful authority. To the demand of the councillors he replied by asking what they would say were he to appoint a new burgomaster at Altenburg; yet they had as little right to introduce a preacher as he would have to interfere in their affairs; further, it was not his duty to stand by and see his collegiate establishment deprived of any of its chartered rights.[3]

The decision came at last before the Elector. He refused to confirm the appointment of Zwilling in his office of preacher, as his turbulent Anabaptist views did not inspire confidence. In the summer of 1522, however, he bestowed the appointment on Wenceslaus Link, one of Luther's friends, without paying any attention to the Canons and obviously acting on Luther's advice. Link, in February, 1523, resigned the office of Vicar-General of the Augustinian Congregation, and soon after was married by Luther himself at Altenburg.

[1] On April 28, 1522, *ibid.*, p. 347.
[2] Above, p 311. Cp. "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 349.
[3] Enders in "Luthers Briefwechsel," 3, p. 334, n. 2.

The Canons protested in vain against the compulsion exercised.

In the spring, 1524, Link succeeded in inducing the council of Altenburg to prohibit the Franciscans from celebrating Mass in public, preaching and hearing confessions. The council vindicated its action in a document—probably composed by Link—addressed to the Elector, in which from the Old and New Testament it is shown that rulers must not tolerate "idolatry."[1] When Spalatin, after resigning his post as Court Chaplain, became parish priest of Altenburg, he at once set about suppressing the Catholic worship even in the Collegiate Church of the town. A demand for the suppression of the "idolatrous worship" at Altenburg, which Luther had addressed to the Elector on July 20, 1525,[2] was followed by another composed by Spalatin in October of the same year.[3] Both were full of attacks on the un-Christian, blasphemous mischief to which an end ought to be put. On January 10, 1526, a fresh document of a similar nature, written by Spalatin and two Altenburg preachers, was forwarded to the Elector. There we read that the sovereign, if he wishes to escape the severe chastisements of God, must follow the example of the pious Jewish kings, who rooted out the abomination of idolatry. Owing to the continuance of the service in the Collegiate Church at Altenburg, the weak were exposed to spiritual danger, and he must furthermore consider that "many a poor man would readily come over to the Evangel if this miserable business were made an end of." The utmost that could be permitted was, that the Canons should perform "their ceremonies in the most private fashion, with locked doors, no one else being admitted."[4]

This petition was at once based by Luther on the general theological principles referred to above, i.e. the statement he had addressed to the Elector, declaring that, owing to the value of the Evangel, no place must be allowed in the Electorate for the practice of any religion other than the "evangelical": Let there be but one doctrine in every place!

[1] For text, see "Mitteilungen der Geschichts- und Altertumsgesellschaft des Osterlandes," 6, 1886, p. 119 ff.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 324 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 221).

[3] See Kolde, "Friedrich der Weise," 1881, p. 72.

[4] For text, see "Mitteilungen . . . des Osterlandes," 6, p. 513 ff.

Luther adds, that the Canons of Altenburg had indeed alleged their conscience, but that this was not a true conscience but merely a fictitious one, otherwise they would have agreed "to allow their conscience to be formed and instructed from Scripture." This they had refused to do, and had appealed instead to traditional usage "as vouched for by the Church," "thereby giving ample proof that their plea concerning their conscience was an invention and only brought forward for the sake of preserving appearances; for a true conscience desires nothing so ardently as to be instructed from Scripture." If they wished to continue publicly to blaspheme the true God by their worship, they must "prove from Scripture their right and authorisation to do so."[1] The Canons were convinced that there was no need for them to prove to Luther their right from the Bible, and also that the best proof would be of no avail. The decision on the validity of any such proof lay in the last instance with the Electoral Court, and he would indeed have been blind who could have expected in that quarter any judgment differing from Luther's.

Recourse was accordingly taken to force, and the Catholic religion was obliged to retire from its last foothold. Nevertheless, a large number of the burghers of Altenburg remained secretly faithful to the Church of their fathers. When, in 1528, the Lutheran visitors held an enquiry there, the town-councillors, who themselves were on the side of Luther, declared there were still "many Papists" in the town.[2]

Lichtenberg, in the Saxon Electorate, affords an example of how Catholic ecclesiastics themselves promoted the falling away of their flock by being the first to join the party of the innovators, sometimes merely in order to be able to marry. As soon as Luther had heard that Wolfgang Reissenbusch, the clerical preceptor and administrator of the property belonging to the Antonines, was showing signs of a desire for matrimony, by means of the seductive letter of March 27, 1525, already quoted above,[3] he invited him to carry out his project

[1] On February 9, 1526, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 367 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 318).

[2] C. A. Burkhardt, "Gesch. der sächs. Kirchenvisitationen, 1524–1545," Leipzig, 1879, p. 44.

[3] See above, p. 116 f.

boldly. After his marriage, and notwithstanding the fact of his broken vow, the monk not only retained his spiritual office, but even continued to administer the temporalities of his Order, in defiance of all justice. According to the custom now introduced, the property was placed at the disposal of the Elector. Reissenbusch enjoyed the favour of the Court, and in due course became one of the councillors of the Elector; his district was gradually won over to Lutheranism.

Count Johann Heinrich of Schwarzburg, son of Count Günther one of Luther's enemies, wished to see the new church system introduced in his domains, but met with the resistance of the monks to whom his father, legally and in due form, had entrusted the livings. He accordingly approached Luther with the question whether he might deprive them of the livings, rights and property.

Luther soon came to a decision, replied in the affirmative and proceeded to explain to his questioner how he might quiet his conscience.[1] The Count's father had made the transfer on the condition that the monks should: "Keep their observance and above all preach the Gospel." Upon taking over the cure of souls they had assumed the usual obligation of preaching the Catholic faith. Now, he continues, it is only necessary that the Count should summon them before him, and in the presence of witnesses prove from their replies that they had not preached the Gospel (i.e. not according to Luther); thereupon he would have the "right and the power, indeed it would be his duty, to take the livings away from them . . . for it is not unjust, but an urgent duty, to drive away the wolf from the sheepfold. . . . No preacher receives property and emoluments for doing harm, but in order that he may make men pious. If, therefore, he does not make them pious, the goods are no longer his. Such is my brief answer." This was indeed the principle which he applied throughout the Saxon Electorate. The result of its application to the bishoprics of Germany and to the great ecclesiastical domains in the Empire was to overthrow the very foundation of the law of property. If the bishop, abbot or provost no longer succeeds in making people pious, "then the property no longer belongs to him."

Johann Heinrich of Schwarzburg at once seized upon the property and rights which his father had made over by charter to the Catholic Church. The monks were ousted, the livings seized, the new teaching was introduced and the Count became the founder of Lutheranism in Schwarzburg.

[1] On December 12, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 154 ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 36).

In Eilenburg Luther proceeded through the agency at once of his sovereign and the town-councillors, who were no less zealous than the Prince himself in their efforts to extend their sphere of influence. Luther himself had already worked there in person for his cause. On the occasion of his second stay at Eilenburg he found the councillors somewhat lacking in zeal. Those who favoured the innovations were, however, of opinion that if the Elector were to invite them to apply for a preacher, they would do so. There is no doubt that the Catholic consciences of the councillors were still troubled with scruples, and that the demand of a number of the new believers among the people had as yet failed to move them.

Luther accordingly wrote from Eilenburg to the Court Chaplain, Spalatin, asking him to employ his influence with the Elector in the usual way. He was to obtain from the latter a letter addressed to the town-councillors begging them to "yield to the poor people in this so essential and sacred a matter," and to summon one of the two preachers whom he at once proposed. The reason he gives in these words: "It is the duty of the sovereign, as ruler and brother Christian, to drive away the wolves and to be solicitous for the welfare of his people."[1] The change of religion was thereupon actually carried out, under the Elector's pressure, in true bureaucratic fashion as a matter appertaining to the magistracy. One of the two preachers proposed, Andreas Kauxdorf of Torgau, arrived shortly after, having been dutifully accepted by the councillors. He was permitted to Lutheranise the people, however reluctant and faithful to the Church they might be. He remained there from 1522 to 1543, in which year he died.

General Phenomena accompanying the Religious Change

It not infrequently happened that the people were deceived by faithless and apostate clerics who became preachers of the new religion, and were drawn away from the olden faith without being clearly aware of the fact. After having become gradually and most insensibly accustomed to the new faith and worship, not even the bravest had, as a rule, the strength to draw back. The want of religious instruction

[1] On May 5, 1522, "ex arce Eylenburgensi," "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 351.

among the people was here greatly to blame, likewise the lack of organised ecclesiastical resistance to the error, and also, the indolence of the episcopate.

Mass still continued to be said in many places where Lutheranism had taken root, though in an altered form, a fact which contributed to the deception. One of the chief of Luther's aims was to combat the Mass as a sacrifice.

He expressed this quite openly to Henry VIII in 1522: "If I succeed in doing away with the Mass, then I shall believe I have completely conquered the Pope. On the Mass, as on a rock, the whole of the Papacy is based, with its monasteries, bishopries, colleges, altars, services and doctrines. . . . If the sacrilegious and cursed custom of Mass is overthrown, then the whole must fall. Through me Christ has begun to reveal the abomination standing in the Holy Place (Dan. ix. 27), and to destroy him [the Papal Antichrist] who has taken up his seat there with the devil's help, with false miracles and deceiving signs."[1] In respect of the deception of the Mass, "I oppose all the pronouncements of the Fathers, of men, of angels, of devils, not by an appeal to 'ancient custom and tradition' nor to any man, but to the Word of the Eternal Majesty and to the Gospel which even my adversaries are forced to acknowledge." "This is God's Word," he vehemently exclaims of his denial of the sacrifice, "not ours. Here I stand, here I take my seat, here I stay, here I triumph and laugh to scorn all Papists, Thomists, Henryists, sophists, and all the gates of hell, not to speak of all the sayings of men, and the most sacred and deceitful of customs."[2]

It was of the utmost importance to him that the Mass should no longer be regarded as a sacrifice and as the centre of worship. He wished to reduce it to a mere "sign and Divine Testament in which God promises us His Grace and assures us of it by a sign."[3] Nor is the presence of Christ in the sacrament, according to him, to be assumed as the result of a change of substance; Christ is in, with, and beneath the bread. The churches were robbed of their Divine Guest, for only in the actual ceremony of reception

[1] "Contra Henricum regem Angliæ," "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 220; "Opp. Lat. var.," 6, p. 445.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 215=437. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 214=437.

was the Supper a sacrament, at all other times it was nothing.[1]

Yet, in spite of all this, as already pointed out, Luther did not wish to abolish every form of liturgical celebration at once. In the reconstruction of public worship everything depended on not making the change felt by the people in a way that was displeasing to them. The very fact of the change was concealed from many by the form of liturgy Luther advocated,[2] and by the retaining of the ceremonies, vestments, lights, etc. Even the elevation was continued for a long while. But, though the celebration was clothed in a Catholic garb, yet of everything that expressed in words the sacrificial character Luther had already said that it "must and shall be done away with."[3]

"The priest," says Luther thoughtfully, when giving detailed instructions on the subject, "will easily be able to arrange that the common people learn nothing of it, and take no scandal."[4] "How the priests are to behave with regard to the Canon," he wrote in his Instruction for the Visitors in the Saxon Electorate, "they know well from other writings, and there is no need to preach much about this to the laity." One would have thought, nevertheless, that the "common people," no less than the learned, had a perfect right to the truth and to being instructed.

Luther was also anxious that the innovation at communion should be introduced in an unobtrusive manner. "Avoid anything unusual or any attempt to oppose the masses."[5]

Although to receive under both kinds was regarded as the only "evangelical" way, agreeable "to Christ's institution," yet the weak were to be permitted to receive under the form of bread only and the reception of the chalice not to be

[1] Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 2^2, p. 245. According to the above new doctrine the Sacrament was not to be reserved in the tabernacle. For further particulars it may suffice to refer to the Memoranda which Luther, Jonas, Bugenhagen, and Melanchthon addressed to the Council of the Margrave of Ansbach and to that of Nuremberg, August 1, 1532, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 319 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 312).

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 72; Erl. ed., 22, p. 228. A Mass in German was, however, also introduced by him because, as he said, many had requested it and "the secular authorities urged him to it." See vol. v., xxix. 9.

[3] "On the twofold species of the Sacrament," 1522, "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 29; Erl. ed., 28, p. 304.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 29=305; cp. Erl. ed., 28, p. 215.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 29=305.

prescribed "until we make the Evangel better known throughout the world."[1] "But if anyone is so weak in this matter as rather to omit receiving the Sacrament altogether than to receive under one kind only, he was also to be indulged and allowed to live according to his conscience."[2] In justification of all this Luther declared that the practice of the new religion must be introduced gently and "without detriment to charity." That it was really a question of preventing disturbances and preserving charity, Cochlæus and others could not be made to see; this writer, in his work on Lutheranism, goes so far as to speak of Luther's "hypocritical deception" of the masses.

Later, the advocate of this sagacious method of procedure could declare: "Thank God, in indifferent matters our churches are so arranged that a layman, whether Italian or Spaniard, unable to understand our preaching, seeing our Mass, choir, organs, bells, chantries, etc., would surely say that it was a regular papist church, and that there was no difference, or very little, between it and his own." He rejoiced that, in spite of the hot-heads, no more had been altered in the ritual than was absolutely necessary to conform it to his teaching.[3]

Such is the course to pursue, he says, "If our churches are not to be shattered and confused and nothing to be effected among the Papists."[4] As a matter of fact, the system he recommended did in some districts "effect much" among Papists who would otherwise have refused to have anything to do with him, the poor people not dreaming of the wide gulf which separated the new worship from the old. The people would not voluntarily have given up their faith in the truly sacrificial character of the Eucharist, in transubstantiation and sacrifice generally; as Melanchthon himself admitted: "The world is so much attached to the Mass that it seems well-nigh impossible to wrest people from it."[5]

We may here mention what occurred at a later date within

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 31=307.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 31=306. To Gregor Brück, Chancellor to the Elector of Saxony, beginning of April, 1541.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 300.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] "Corp. Reform.," 1, p. 842; cp. p. 845. In reply to Luther's grievances against the celebration of Mass in earlier times, W. Köhler remarks ("Katholizismus und Reformation," p. 46) that one might form a better opinion of the Mass from A. Franz's book, "Die Messe im Mittelalter" (1902), than from Luther's writings.

the Lutheran fold. At the instigation of Wittenberg the adaptation of the Catholic worship was carried out very thoroughly in some places, the principle proving highly conducive to the acceptance of the new church system. In few countries, however, was this the case to such an extent as in Denmark, where Luther's friend Bugenhagen was responsible for the change of religion. Even to-day, in the Protestant worship established in Denmark, Norway and the duchies formerly united to the Danish crown, there is to be found a surprising number of Catholic reminiscences, from the solemn Eucharistic service down to the ringing of the bells thrice daily for prayer. In the celebration of the solemn Eucharist the preachers even vest in a white linen alb and chasuble of red velvet; the elevation, too, is still preserved, for, after the "consecration," which is pronounced from the middle of the altar according to immemorial custom, the Bread and Wine are shown to the people.

Martin Weier, a young student of good family from Pomerania, took counsel of Luther as to how, on his return from Wittenberg, he was to behave with regard to his old father in the matter of Divine worship. Luther, according to his own account, told him "to conform to his father's wishes in every way in order not to offend him; follow his example concerning fasting, prayer, hearing Mass and the veneration of the Saints, but at the same time instruct him in the Word of God and on the subject of justification, so as, if possible, to become his spiritual father without giving any offence." Luther had declared concerning himself that he had offended God most horribly by his former celebration of Mass, more so than if he had been "a highwayman or kept a brothel"; yet he tells his aristocratic pupil that he will be committing no sin, if, "for the sake of his father, he is present at Mass and other acts by which God is dishonoured."[1]

A contrast to this system of accommodation and the gentle introduction of innovations is presented by the acts of violence which too often occurred on German soil at the time of the religious revolution. The excesses perpetrated by the people were, as can be proved, encouraged by the inflammatory speeches of the preachers, Luther's own words being frequently appealed to; their effect in such

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 265, and *ibid.*, n. 83.

times of popular commotion was like that of oil poured on the flames. In "the streets and at every corner," on all the walls, on placards, in broadsides, and even on playing cards the clergy and the monks were abused, to quote Luther's own testimony.[1] "Turks" and "worse than Turks," such were the descriptions applied to them by the populace in imitation of Luther. "We shall never be successful against the Turks," he says later, reverting to his earlier style of language, "unless we fall upon them and the priests at the right moment and smite them dead."[2]

In the case of Luther himself such expressions were empty words, but the mob scrupled little about carrying them into effect. In many instances, however, lust for riches on the part of the great, who longed to possess themselves of Church property, and the long-standing antagonism of towns and Princes to the rights claimed by bishops and abbots, led to violence. The exaltation of their own power was for many of the authorities their principal reason for taking sides against the older Church. It must be borne in mind that, subsequent to 1525, Luther himself was no longer the sole head of the movement of apostasy. More and more he began to hand over the actual guidance of the movement to the secular power, a condition of things which had been preparing since the Diet of Worms. The direction of so far-reaching an undertaking was scarcely suited to his talents, which were not of the administrative order. To his followers, however, he remained the chief authority as pastor, preacher and writer; he continued to take an active part in all public affairs, and, on many occasions, exercised a direct and profound influence on the spread of the new Church.

Many well-meaning and highly respected men supported the new establishment from no selfish motives, and became open and genuine promoters of Luther's cause, because they looked upon it as just and true. The ideal character, which Wittenberg was successful in stamping on Luther's aims, proved very seductive, especially in the then prevailing

[1] To Albert, Elector of Mayence, June 2, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., 35, p. 309 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 186).

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 80. In parallel passages in other collections the words read "the priests at Zeitz and Meissen"; obviously the proper names are misprints for "Zeit" and "schmeissen."

ignorance of the real state of things, and in many places won for the cause devoted and enthusiastic workers.

To take but one example: A knight, Hartmuth (Hartmann) von Cronberg, in the Taunus, glowing with zeal for the new Evangel, wrote a letter recommending the Lutheran congregational system to the inhabitants of Cronberg and Frankfurt.

In 1522 he published a letter, addressed to Luther, in which he expresses his readiness to work faithfully with him in order that "all may awake from the sleep and prison of sin." I have heard, with heartfelt sympathy, he says to Luther, of "your great pains and crosses arising from the ardent charity you bear towards God and your neighbour, for I am thoroughly aware, from sad observation, of the misery and dreadful ruin of the whole German nation." "It is no wonder that a true Christian should tremble in every limb with horror when he considers the desolation and how awful the fall of Germany must be unless a Merciful God enlightens us by His Grace so that we may come to the knowledge of Him." "Fain would I speak to the German lands and say: O Germany! rejoice in the visitation of your heavenly Father, accept with humble thanksgiving the heavenly light, the Divine Truth and the Supreme Condescension, avail yourself of the great clemency of God, Who of His Mercy is ready to forgive you your great sin. . . . Throw off the heavy yoke of the devil and accept the sweet yoke of Christ." The writer beseeches God to grant "that we may not trust in ourselves or our works; rather do Thou justify us by a strong faith and confidence in Thee alone, and Thy Divine promises, in order that Thy Divine, Supreme Name, Grace and Clemency may be increased, praised and magnified throughout the world."[1]

The same enthusiastic man of the sword had, even before this, expressed himself in favour of Luther in other writings in language almost fanatical. Luther, while at the Wartburg, had received two pamphlets from him, one addressed to the Emperor and the other to the Mendicant Orders. Luther had thanked him in similar tones for his zeal, and encouraged him to stand fast in spite of persecution.[2] The above-quoted letter, addressed by Cronberg to Luther, was his answer to Luther's from the Wartburg; both were printed together and made the round of Germany under the title "A missive to all those who suffer persecution for the Word of God."

Luther there says to his admirer: "It is plain that your words spring from the depths of your heart and soul," and this testimony seemed no exaggeration in the eyes of many who were also working for the spread of Lutheranism with all their heart, and

[1] On April 14, 1512, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 335.

[2] About the middle of March, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 119 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 308).

in the best of faith. Cronberg and all these were animated by the spirit which Luther by his writings had sought to instil into all, and which he had once expressed in his own powerful, defiant fashion: "And even should Satan attempt greater and worse things he shall not weary us; he may as well attempt to drag Christ down from the right hand of God. Christ sits there enthroned, and we too shall remain masters and lords over sin, death, the devil and every thing."

The earnestness with which Cronberg espoused the Lutheran ideas is shown by the fact of his resigning, after the Diet of Worms, a yearly stipend of 200 gold gulden, promised him by the Emperor, when he entered his service with Sickingen in 1519.[1] The assistance he lent to Sickingen's treacherous machinations against the Empire proved his undoing. His castle of Cronberg was seized on October 15, 1522. He sought to console himself for the loss of his property by a passionate devotion to his religious and political aims. After a life of "undismayed attachment to what he deemed his duty," says H. Ulmann, this man, "whose fidelity to conviction verged on puritanism," died at Cronberg on August 7, 1549.[2]

This Lutheran had demanded of the Emperor that he should convince the Pope by "irrefragable proofs" that he was the viceroy of the devil, nay, himself Antichrist. But should the Pope, owing to demoniacal possession, not admit this, then the Emperor had full right and authority and was bound before God to proceed against him by force, as against an apostate, heretic and Antichrist."[3] Some of his admirers, and likewise a eulogist of modern times, have extolled Hartmuth von Cronberg as a "Knight after God's own heart." His fanaticism, however, went so far that few dared to follow. The most unjust acts of violence, not merely against the Papal Antichrist, but also against church property which he declared everyone free to appropriate, were exalted by him to principles. In a circular-letter to Sickingen he wrote: "All ecclesiastical property

[1] Luther to Melanchthon, May 12, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 149: "*Hartmannus Cronenbergius renuntiavit Cæsari stipendium 200 aureorum nummorum, nolens servire ei, qui impios istos* (Luther's princely foes) *audiat . . . Deus vivit et regnat in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*"

[2] H. Ulmann, "Franz von Sickingen," Leipzig, 1872, p. 186.

[3] Cp. Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," 2^{18}, p. 251 f.

has been declared free [i.e. ownerless] by God Himself, so that whoever by the grace of God can get some of it may keep it with God's help, and no creature whether Pope or devil can harm such property." He warns the Frankfurt priest, Peter Meyer, in a printed letter, that unless he is converted to the "Evangel" any man may, with a good conscience, take action against him, "just as it is lawful to fall upon a ravening wolf, a sacrilegious thief and murderer, with word and deed."[1]

Wittenberg. The Saxon Electorate

The abolition of the last remnants of Catholic worship in Wittenberg was characterised by violence and utter want of consideration.

Only in the Collegiate Church, which was ruled by Provost and Chapter, had it been possible to continue the celebration of Mass. On April 26, 1522, at the instance of Luther, the Elector Frederick determined that the solemn exposition of the rich treasury of relics belonging to the Church should be discontinued, in spite of the fact that the relics were in great part his own gift to a Church which had enjoyed his especial favour. Luther, however, was anxious completely to transform this "Bethaven," this place of idolatry, as he called the Church,[2] and in this matter the Prior and some of the Canons were on his side.

After some unsuccessful negotiations, carried on with the Elector through Spalatin, Luther himself invited the Chapter, on March 1, 1523, to abolish all Catholic ceremonies, as abominations, which could only give scandal at Wittenberg. "The cause of the 'Evangel,' which Christ has committed to this city as a priceless gift," forced him, so he declared, to speak. "My conscience can no longer keep silence owing to the office entrusted to me." If they would not give way peaceably, then they must be prepared for "public insults" from him, seeing that they would have to be excluded from the congregation as non-Christians, and have their company shunned.[3]

[1] The passages quoted, *ibid.*, p. 252.

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 525.

[3] "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 90. Cp. the contradiction between this and his statement given above, p. 295 (cp. p. 328, n. 3), on the right and duty of the authorities in regard to Divine worship.

The Dean, who was faithful to the Church, and the Catholic members of the Chapter persisted in their resistance, urging that the Elector himself did not wish to see the Masses discontinued which his ancestors had founded for the repose of their souls.

Luther, not in the least disconcerted, on July 11, 1523, repeated his written declaration, this time in a peremptory tone. "If we endure this any longer," he writes, "it will fall upon our own heads and we shall be burdened with the sins of others." The Canons were not to tell him that "the Elector commanded or did not command to do this or to alter that. I am speaking now to your own consciences. What has the Elector to do with such matters?" he asks, strangely contradicting his own theory. "You know what St. Peter says, Acts v. 29, 'We ought to obey God rather than men,' and St. Paul (Gal. i. 8), 'Though an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.'" He summons them to "obey," otherwise he will pray against them as he has hitherto prayed for them, and as Christ was "jealous" it might be that his "prayer would be powerful and you may have to suffer for it." "Christ soon punishes those who are His, when they wax disobedient (cp. 1 Peter iv. 17)."[1]

His violence in the pulpit gave reason for anticipating the worst when, on the very next day, he gave free rein to his eloquence against the Collegiate Church.

On August 2, 1523, he again stirred up the excited mob against the Canons and their service.[2]

He spoke to the multitude on that day of independent action to be taken by all who were able, without the Elector and even against him: "What does he matter to us?" he cried. "He commands only in worldly matters. But if he attempts to act further, we [i.e. Luther and the people] shall say: "Your Grace, pray look after your own business."[3] It was an unequivocal invitation to make use of force when he told the people in the same sermon, that they also would be "responsible for the sins of others" if they permitted the Popish disorder any longer

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 178 ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 176).

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 649.

[3] Very different are his words in the "Exhortation to abstain from revolt" of the end of 1521 ("Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 680): "Pay heed to the authorities. So long as they do not take up the matter and give orders, remain quiet. If they are against action, you must be so also. For if you do anything, you are unjust and much worse than the opposite party."

in their midst. "I am afraid that this may also be the reason why the Evangel effects so little amongst us, viz. that we suffer such things to be."[1] Yet he was careful prudently to admonish the people not to touch the Canons' persons.

This admonition seems to have been more than counterbalanced by the remaining contents of the discourse. After the sermon the Elector sent to remind Luther earnestly that, as a rule, he had spoken against risings and that he trusted he would "not go any further," as there was quite enough "discontent at Wittenberg already."[2] The offender in reply assured the Elector by messenger, that he would give the people no occasion for the employment of force, for discontent or tumult,[3] and, for the time being, he refrained from any further steps. Whether he calmed the populace, or how he did this, we are not told. We do know, however, that he addressed a fresh letter to the Canons couched in such strong language as to draw down on himself another reprimand from the Elector, who urged that Luther did not act up to what he preached.[4] In the letter in question, dated November 17, 1524, he told the Canons quite openly, that, unless they refrained voluntarily from "Masses, vigils and everything contrary to the Holy Evangel," they would be forced to do so; he moreover asked for a "true, straight and immediate answer, yea or nay, before next Sunday"; what has happened is that "the devil has inspired you with a spirit of defiance and mischief." The "great patience with which we have hitherto supported your devilish behaviour and the idolatry in your Churches" is exhausted. He also hints that they could no longer be certain of the Elector's protection.[5]

Had he drawn the bow still tighter and incited to direct acts of violence, the results would have fallen on his own head. Yet a sermon which he delivered on November 27 against Mass at the Collegiate Church had such an effect upon the people, that the matter was decided. In it he asserted, that the Mass was blasphemy, madness and a lie; its celebration was worse than unchastity, murder or robbery; princes, burgomasters, councillors and judges must protect the honour of God, since they had received the sword from Him.[6] He exhorts "all princes and rulers, burgomasters, councillors and judges" to summon the "blasphemous ministers" of the "whore of Babylon" and force them to answer for themselves. His appeal is ostensibly for the interference of the responsible authorities, not of the masses.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 649 f.

[2] The Elector's Instructions to Hier. Schurf, Joh. Schwertfeger and Melanchthon re Luther, August 7, 1523, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 203.

[3] Hier. Schurf, etc., to the Elector, August 13, 1523, *ibid.*, p. 207.

[4] The Elector pointed out that "he himself preached that the Word of God must be allowed to settle the question, and that this would in its own good time have the desired effect, so God willed" (November 24). See Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 5, p. 55, n.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 269 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 54).

[6] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 527, with the texts, p. 780.

The agitation intentionally fomented became, however, so great, that the Canons did not know what steps to take against the "rising excitement of the inhabitants" of Wittenberg,[1] for the saving of the Catholic services, and for the safety of their own persons. Even before this, students had perpetrated disorders at night in the Collegiate Church, and Luther had himself declared that he was obliged daily to restrain the people to prevent the committing of excesses. The Canons were now tormented by the singing of satires on the Mass outside their house, and had to listen to the curses which were showered on them. One night the Dean had his windows smashed. The Town Council, and also the University, now definitely took sides against the Chapter, and, after warning them in writing of God's anger, sent representatives to advise the Canons of their excommunication. Although no actual tumult took place, yet the public declarations and the threatening attitude of the populace incited by Luther amounted to practical compulsion. The few Canons still remaining finally yielded to force, particularly when they saw that the Elector, Frederick "the Wise," refused to give any but evasive replies to their appeals.

On Christmas Day, 1524, for the first time, there was no Mass.

Protestants themselves have recently admitted that, "contrary to the express wish of the sovereign and not without the employment of force against the Canons"[2] did "Luther succeed in carrying matters so far."[3] "The Canons finally gave way before new outbursts of violence on the part of the students and the citizens," when, according to Luther's own account, there remained only "three hogs and paunches" of all the Canons formerly attached to this Church, not of "All Saints," but rather of "All Devils."[4]

An echo of his tempestuous sermon of November 27 is to be found in the pamphlet which Luther published at the commencement of 1525: "On the abomination of Silent Masses" (against the Canon of the Mass). In the Preface he refers directly to the inglorious proceedings against the unfortunate Chapter. He finds it necessary to declare that

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 527, with the texts, p. 780.
[2] Th. Kolde, "Friedrich der Weise," p. 34.
[3] C. A. Burkhardt, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 1866, p. 76.
[4] Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 1, p. 550.

he, for his part, had aroused no revolt, for what was done by the established authorities could not be termed revolt; the "secular gentlemen," who, according to him, constituted the established authorities, had, however, felt it their duty to take steps against the Catholic worship in the Collegiate Church.

In that same year, 1525, under the auspices of the new Elector Johann, a great friend to Lutheranism, who succeeded the Elector Frederick upon his death on May 5, 1525, and whom Luther had long before won over to his cause, the order of Divine Service at Wittenberg was entirely altered. "The Pope" was at last, as Spalatin joyfully proclaimed throughout the city, "completely set aside."[1]

Under the rule of the Elector Johann, Luther at once carried out the complete suppression of Catholic worship throughout the Electorate.

On October 1, 1525, Spalatin wrote to the Elector Johann: "Dr. Martin also says, that your Electoral Grace is on no account to permit anyone to continue the anti-Christian ceremonies any longer, or to start them again."[2]

With the object of helping him in his work at Court and of removing any scruples he might have, Luther explained to Spalatin, in a letter of November 11 of the same year, that by stamping out the Catholic worship rulers would not be forcing the faith on anyone, but merely prohibiting such open abominations as the Mass; if anyone, in spite of all, desired to believe in it privately, or to blaspheme in secret, no coercion would be exercised.[3] No attention was paid to the rights of Catholics to a Divine Worship, attendance at which was to them a matter of conscience. They were simply to be permitted to emigrate; if they chose to remain they were not to "perform or take any part in any public worship."[4] It was on such principles as these that the Memorandum which Spalatin presented to the Elector on January 10, 1526, was based.[5]

[1] Cp. Spalatin to V. Warbeck, September 30, 1525, in Schlegel, "Vita Spalatini," p. 222. [2] Kolde, *ibid.*, p. 72.
[3] "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 271 *seq.* [4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 524.
[5] Reprinted in the "Mitteil. der Gesch. und Altertumsges. des Osterl.," 6, 1886, p. 513. Cp. N. Paulus, "War Luther im Prinzip tolerant?" ("Wissenschaftl. Beilage zur Germania," 1910, Nos. 12, 13, p. 96).

Luther himself appealed to the Elector on February 9, 1526, seeking to "fortify his conscience" and to encourage him "to attack the idolaters with even greater readiness." He points out to him, first, how damnable is the blasphemous, idolatrous worship; were he to afford it any protection, then "all the abominations against God would eventually weigh upon his, the Prince's, conscience"; secondly, that differences in religious worship would inevitably give rise to "revolt and tumults"; hence the ruler must provide that "in each locality there be but one doctrine."[1]

To the force of such arguments Johann could not but yield.

He answered in a friendly letter to Luther on February 13, 1526, that he had been pleased to take note of the difficulty, and would for the future know how to comport himself in these matters in a Christian and irreproachable manner.[2] Subsequent to this assurance he acted as an apt pupil of the Wittenberg Professor.

In accordance with the instructions given by the Elector in 1527 for the general Visitation of the Churches in the Saxon Electorate, an "inquisition" was to be held everywhere by the ecclesiastical Visitors as to whether any "sect or schism" existed in the country. Whoever was "suspected of error in respect of the sacraments or some doctrine of faith" was to be "summoned and interrogated, and, if the occasion required, hostile witnesses were to be heard"; if any refused to give up their "error," they were commanded to sell their possessions within a given time and to quit the country.[3] One thing only was still wanting, viz. that the people should be compelled by the Ruler to attend the Lutheran sermons and services. Even this was, however, implied in the regulations, since those who did not attend were classed among the "suspects." As time went on Luther demanded the exercise of such coercion, and it was

[1] Letters, ed. De Wette, 3, p. 88 *seq.*, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 367 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 318). It is therefore incorrect to assert that Luther was thinking only of the peace which would be a result of uniform preaching, and not of the damnable nature of the worship to be prohibited. See the passages quoted here and above, p. 315 ff.

[2] "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 321.

[3] E. Sehling, "Die evang. Kirchenordnungen des 16 Jahrh.," 1, 1902, p. 142 ff.

actually introduced in the Electorate and, later, in the Protestant Duchy of Saxony.[1]

The proceedings on the introduction of the innovations in other districts were similar to those in the Electorate of Saxony. Wherever a small group of persons were willing to throw in their lot with the first local representatives of the new faith—generally clerics—they were backed up by the State authorities, who reconstructed the religious system as they thought best. "Nowhere was the primitive Lutheran ideal realised of a congregation forming itself in entire independence. . . . Thus at an early date Lutheranism took its place among the political factors, and its development was to a certain extent dependent upon the tendencies and inclinations of the authorities and ruling sovereigns of that day."[2]

The Electors Frederick and Johann of Saxony were gradually joined by a number of other Princes who introduced the innovations into their lands, and the magistrates of the larger, and even of some of the smaller, Imperial cities soon followed suit. Thus the whole movement, having owed its success so largely to the authorities, was governed and exploited by them and assumed a strongly political character, needless to say, much to the detriment of its religious aspect.

What part the "inclinations of the ruling sovereigns" played, even in opposition to Luther's own wishes, is plain from the example of the Margrave Philip of Hesse, who, next to the Elector of Saxony, was the most powerful, and undoubtedly the most determined, promoter of the great apostasy. This Prince, whose leanings were towards Zürich, as early as 1529 was anxious to extend the alliance he had concluded in the interests of the innovations with the Saxon Electorate, so as to embrace also the Zwinglians. Attracted by Zwingli's denial of the sacrament, he also sought, with the assistance of theologians of his own way of thinking, to amalgamate the Swiss doctrine with that of

[1] Luther to Levin Metzsch, August 26, 1529, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 97 ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 149); to Thomas Löscher of same date, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 150; to the Margrave George of Brandenburg, September 14, 1531, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 253 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 103).

[2] W. Friedensburg, "Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgesch.," No. 100, 1910, p. 50.

Wittenberg; in this he was not, however, successful. The great religious alliance with Wittenberg aimed at by Zwingli himself as well as by Philip, and which it was hoped to settle at the Conference of Marburg (see vol. iii., xix. 1), was never realised, Luther refusing to give in on any point. In Hesse, however, the Zwinglian influence was maintained through the agency of theologians of Bucer's school, which had the favour of the Court, while at Strasburg and other South German cities the authorities, leaning even more to the Swiss Confession, set up their "reformed" view as the actual rule of faith in their domains.

Nuremberg

The history of the apostasy of Nuremberg, which may be considered separately here, exhibits another type of the proceedings at the general religious revolution.

Here the two centres of the inception of the movement were the Augustinian monastery, inhabited by monks of Luther's own Order, and, as in so many other places, the town-council. Several clerics had already preached the new doctrines when the magistrates, at the time of the Diet of Nuremberg, in 1522, from motives of prudence, forbade the discussion of controversial questions in the pulpit. In 1524 two Provosts, and likewise the Prior of the Augustinians, abolished the celebration of Mass. The most active in the cause of the change of religion was the former priest and preacher, Andreas Osiander. At the Diet of Nuremberg, in 1524, Catholic prelates were insulted by the excited mob. Wives were taken by the Augustinian Johann Walter, by Dominic Schleupner, preacher at St. Sebaldus, by the Abbot of St. Ægidius, by Provost Pessler and Osiander himself. Whereas the town-council—the moving spirits of which were Hieronymus Ebner, Caspar Stützel and particularly Lazarus Spengler, the Town Clerk—formally decided to join Luther's party, many among the people remained wavering, doubtful and undecided; here, as in so many other places, we find no trace of any sudden falling away of the people as a whole.

What Charity Pirkheimer, the sister of the learned Nuremberg patrician, wrote of her native city is applicable to many other towns: "I frequently hear that there are many people in this city who are almost in despair and no longer go to any sermons, but say the preaching has led them astray so that they really do not know what to believe, and that they are sorry they ever listened to it."[1]

[1] "Charitas Pirkheimers Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Reformationszeitalter," ed. C. Höfler, 1852, p. 130. Cp. Franz Binder, "Charitas Pirkheimer"[2], 1878.

The magistrates of Nuremberg, by dint of violent measures, sapped all Catholic life little by little and prevailed on the chief families to embrace Lutheranism. The religious Orders were prohibited from undertaking the cure of souls, the clergy were ordained civilly, while, to those who proved amenable, stipends were assured for life. The monastery of St. Ægidius surrendered to the magistrates in 1525 with its community numbering twenty-five persons, likewise the Augustinian priory from which no less than twenty-four religious passed over to Lutheranism, likewise the Carmelite monastery with fifteen priests and seven lay brothers, of whom only a few remained staunch, and finally the Carthusian house, where most of the monks became Lutherans.

All these changes took place in 1525.

The Dominicans held out longer. At last the five surviving Friars surrendered their convent to the magistrates in 1543. The Franciscan Observantines, however, made the finest stand, enduring every kind of persecution and the most abject poverty until the last died in 1562. Together with the sons of St. Francis mention must also be made of the convent of Poor Clares, subject to them, and presided over as Abbess by Charity Pirkheimer, a lady equally clever and pious.

The Poor Clares, eighty in number, were, like the nuns of the other convents in the town, deprived of their preachers and confessors and forced to listen to the evangelical pastors, which they did grudgingly and with many a murmur. For five years they were forcibly prevented from receiving the Blessed Sacrament. The priests of the town could only bring them spiritual assistance at the peril of their lives, and the consolations of the Church had eventually to be conveyed to them from a distance, from Bamberg and Spalt, by priests in disguise. One after another the inmates died in heroic fidelity to the Catholic religion ; those who survived clung even more closely to the faith of their fathers and to the strict observance of their Rule. It is touching to read in the "Memoirs" of Charity Pirkheimer how the poor nuns passed through the misery of bodily privations and spiritual martyrdom in union with our suffering Saviour, in an inward peace which nothing could destroy ; how they worked actively for their friends, the poor of the city, and even celebrated now and then little family festivals in joyful, sisterly love.

Wenceslaus Link, the former Superior of the Augustinian house at Altenburg, had removed to Nuremberg with his wife, where he became warden and preacher to the new hospital, proving himself a fierce Lutheran. In 1541 he informed Luther of the sad experiences he had had with the Evangel in the city. The "Word" was despised, he writes, immorality was on the increase and went unpunished, the preachers were hated and he himself when he went out had the name "parson" derisively hurled at him ; people dubbed the Evangel a human invention, and snapped their fingers at the sentence of excommunication. Luther expressed his sympathy with his downhearted correspon-

dent and sought to encourage him: it grieved him deeply, he wrote, that this fate should have befallen the Word of God; such a state of things was the third great temptation in the history of the Church, the first being the persecutions in the times of the Pagan rulers, and the second the difficulties occasioned by the great heresies in the period of the Fathers of the Church, both of which had been safely withstood. He comforts Link by assuring him that this, the third great temptation of the Gospel, will also pass over happily. "Should this not be the case, however, then there is no hope for Nuremberg, for that would be to grieve the Holy Ghost, and it would be necessary to think of quitting this Babylon. 'We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed [he says with Jeremias li. 9]; let us forsake her.'"[1]

It would, of course, be unfair to ascribe to Luther all the deeds of violence or injustice which took place in great number on the spread of the new ecclesiastical system. It is notorious how much the unruly, turbulent spirit of that day contributed to the distressing phenomena of the struggle then being carried on. Such a far-reaching revolution naturally set free forces and passions in both the higher and lower spheres, which could only with difficulty be brought once more under control. Now and then, too, faithful Catholics, laymen, priests and religious, by a misuse of the power they happened to possess, gave occasion to renewed acts of oppression on the part of the Lutherans.

It is, nevertheless, right to point out the turbulent stamp which Luther impressed upon the movement. His own share in the work, some examples of which we have considered above, were utterly at variance with his advice to Gabriel Zwilling, viz. "to leave everything to God, to avoid introducing innovations and to guide the people solely by faith and charity" (above, p. 314).

Luther and the Introduction of the New Teaching at Erfurt

The most powerful impulse to the introduction of the new teaching in Erfurt proceeded from the Augustinian house in that town. Its former Prior, Johann Lang, became an apostle of Lutheranism after having prepared the way for the innovation as a Humanist of modern views closely allied with the Humanist group at Erfurt.

[1] On September 8, 1541, Letters, ed. De Wette, 5, p. 398 f. The nature of the complaints made by Link are inferred from this letter.

We find Lang, in the summer of 1520, still Rural Vicar of his Order, and he may have retained the dignity for some time longer when Wenceslaus Link was elected as Staupitz's successor at the Chapter held at Eisleben in that year. The fourteen monks of the Augustinian Congregation—at one time so faithful to the Church—who quitted the Order before Lang, remind us of the sad fact, that in his work Luther met with support in many places from those who were originally Catholics, and that the innovation was often heartily welcomed by members of the clergy, secular and regular.

The Saxon Augustinian Congregation, which was strongly represented at Erfurt, had been undermined by Luther's spirit no less than by the struggle between the Conventuals and the Observantines. At the convention of the Order, held at Wittenberg on the Feast of the Three Kings in 1522, it was decided that begging would henceforth be no longer allowed,[1] "because we follow Holy Scripture." At that time many had already apostatised. It was further ordained, that, by virtue of the evangelical freedom of the servants of God, everyone was free to leave his monastery. "Among those who are Christ's there is neither monk nor layman. Whoever is not yet able to comprehend this freedom may act as he thinks fit, but must not give scandal to others by his conduct, in order that the Holy Evangel be not blasphemed." On this the Protestant historian of the Augustinian Congregation remarks: "This [i.e. the giving of no scandal] was more easily commended than put into effect." And, speaking of the time when the Erfurt Augustinian house was already almost empty (Usingen, Nathin and a few others alone remaining faithful), he writes: "Lang and his companions were in great danger of seeing the triumph of the Evangel rather in the rooting out of Popery than in the promoting of the new evangelical life. . . . Usingen, exposed to the mockery and insults of his own pupils, which he had certainly never deserved, at last quitted in anger the spot where he had worked for many years," "an honest man."[2] He withdrew in 1525 to the Augustinian monastery at Würzburg.

Factors favourable to the spread of Lutheranism in

[1] Kolde, "Die deutsche Augustinerkongregation," p. 378 f.
[2] *Ibid.*

Erfurt were: The Humanism, antagonistic to the Church, which was all-powerful at the University; the restlessness of the common people, who were dissatisfied with their condition; the jealousy existing between the secular and regular clergy, the struggle which the town was carrying on with its chief pastor, the Archbishop of Mayence, concerning rights and property; last, but not least, the hatred of the laity for the opulent and far too numerous clergy. Here, therefore, we find the selfsame elements present which elsewhere so ably seconded the preaching of the new evangelists.

Erfurt affords an example of how pious foundations of former ages had multiplied to an excessive and burdensome extent, a condition of things which was no longer any real advantage to the Church, and simply tended to arouse the jealousy of the laity and working man.

There were more than three hundred vicariates (livings, or benefices), twenty-one parish churches or churches of the same standing, thirty chapels and six hospitals; the number of secular clergy was in proportion to the work entailed in serving the above, and there was an even greater number of monks and nuns. In every corner there were monastic establishments. Benedictines, the Scottish Brotherhood, the Canons Regular, Carthusians, Dominicans and Franciscans, Servites and Augustinians, all were represented. In addition to this were four or five convents of women. Erfurt perhaps possessed more ecclesiastical foundations and institutions than any other town in Germany, with the possible exception of Cologne and Nuremberg.[1] The rich possessions of the convents and churches at Erfurt were made the pretext for the religious innovations. The immunity they enjoyed from the burdens borne by the citizens was to be made an end of, the ecclesiastical property was to be handed over to the town, and the town itself was to be withdrawn from the temporal sway of the Archbishop of Mayence.

When Luther, who was already under the ban, preached at Erfurt, on April 7, 1521, in the Church of the Augustinians (see above, p. 63), he represented the religious change, the way for which had already been paved,

[1] Cp. Kolde, "Das religiöse Leben in Erfurt beim Ausgang des Mittelalters," 1898, p. 3, and the work of the Erfurt expert, Georg Oergel, "Vom jungen Luther," 1899, p. 42.

in the light of that evangelical freedom which his view of faith and works was to bring to the inhabitants of Erfurt.[1]

"We must not build upon human laws or works, but have a real faith in Him Who destroys all sin. . . . Thus we don't care a straw for man-made laws." He derides the ecclesiastical laws, enacted by shepherds who destroyed the sheep and treated them "as butchers do on Easter Eve." "Are all human laws to be ignored?" "I answer and say, that, where true Christian charity and faith prevails, everything that a man does is meritorious and each one may do as he pleases, provided always that he accounts his works as nothing; for they cannot save him." "Christ's work, which is not ours," alone avails to save us. He extols the "*sola fides*" in persuasive and popular language, showing how it alone justifies and saves us.

It was on this occasion that, unguardedly, he allowed himself to be carried away to say: "What matters it if we commit a fresh sin! so long as we do not despair but remember that Thou, O God, still livest."[2]

The contrary "delusion," he says, had been invented and encouraged by the preachers, whose proceedings were infinitely worse than any mere "numbering of the people." He storms against the clergy and vigorously foments the social discontent. To build churches, or found livings, etc., was mere outward show; "such works simply gave rise to avarice, desire for the praise of men and other vices." "You think that as a priest you are free from sin, and yet you nourish so much jealousy in your heart; if you could slay your neighbour with impunity you would do so and then go on saying Mass. Surely it would not be surprising were a thunderbolt to smite you to the earth." In order to complete the effect of this demagogic outburst he mocks at the sermons, with their legends "about the old ass," etc., and their quotations from ancient philosophers, who were "not only against the Gospel, but even against God Himself."

The result was stupendous, especially in the case of the young men at the University whom the Humanists had disposed in Luther's favour. On the day after Luther's departure one of his sympathisers, a Canon of the Church of St. Severus, who had taken part in the solemn reception accorded Luther on his arrival in the town, was told by the Dean, Jakob Doliatoris, that he was under excommunication and might no longer attend the service in choir. On his complaining to the University, of which he was a

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 808 ff.; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 251.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 810=254.

member, the students intervened with demonstrations in his favour.[1]

Luther heard of this only through certain unreliable reports and wrote to Spalatin: "They apprehend still worse things at Erfurt. The Senate pretends to see nothing of what is going on. The clergy are reviled. The young apprentices are said to be in league with the students. We are about to see the prophecy fulfilled: 'Erfurt has become a new [Husite] Prague.'" Previous to this, in the same letter, he had said of his adversaries in the Empire: "Let them be, perhaps the day of their visitation is at hand."[2]

Soon after, however, he became rather more concerned, perhaps owing to further reports of the unrest, and began to fear for the "good name and progress of the Evangel," in consequence of the acts of brutality committed. "It is indeed quite right," he wrote to Melanchthon, "that those who persist in their impiety should have their courage cooled," but in this "Satan makes a mockery of us"; he sees in a mystical vision "The Judgment Day," the approaching end of the world at Erfurt, and the fig tree, as had been foretold, growing up, covered with leaves, but bare of fruit because the cause of the Evangel could not make its way.[3]

In July, 1521, there broke out in the town the so-called "Pfaffensturm."

In a few days more than sixty parsonages had been pulled down, libraries destroyed and the archives and tithe registers of the ecclesiastical authorities ransacked; little regard was shown for human life. A little later seven clergy-houses were again set on fire. Meanwhile the Lutheran preachers, with the fanatical Lang at their head, were at liberty to stir up the people.[4] The ruin of the University was imminent; many parents withdrew their sons, fearing lest they should be infected with the "Husite heresy." The customary Catholic services were, however,

[1] Cp. G. Oergel, "Beitrage zur Gesch. des Erfurter Humanismus," in "Mitt. des Vereins für Gesch. und Altertumskunde von Erfurt," Hft. 15, Erfurt, 1892, p. 85 ff., who points out certain errors of Kampschulte in his "Gesch. der Erfurter Universität."

[2] On May 14, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 153.

[3] About the middle of May, 1521, *ibid.*, p. 158.

[4] Janssen, "Hist. of the German People," 3, p. 246 ff.

performed as usual, but the end of Catholic worship could be foreseen owing to the ever-increasing growth of "evangelical freedom." Renegade monks, especially Luther's former Augustinian comrades, preached against "the old Church as the mother of faithlessness and hypocrisy"; Lang spoke of the monasteries as "dens of robbers." Under the attacks of the preachers one human ordinance after another fell to the ground. Fasting, long prayers, founded Masses, confraternities, everything in fact, disappeared before the new liberty, value being allowed only to temporal works of mercy. The avarice of the "shorn, anointed priestlings" was no longer to be stimulated by the people's money. "Ruffianly crowds showed their sympathy with the preachers by yelling and shouting in church. Theological questions were debated in market-places and taverns, men, women and boys expounded the Bible."[1]

Luther, through Lang, urged the Augustinians at Erfurt, who still remained true to their monastic Rule, to apostatise; he merely expressed the wish that there should be no "tumults" against the Order. Lang was to "defend the cause of the Evangel"[2] at the next Convention of the Saxon Augustinians, a meeting which took place at Epiphany, 1522 (above, p. 337). Lang justified his apostasy in a work in which he expressly appeals to the new doctrines on faith and good works. The exodus of the monks from their convent was not, however, carried out as quietly as Luther would have wished; he dreaded the "slanders of the foes of the Evangel" and was depressed by the immorality of the inhabitants of Erfurt, and by his own experience with his followers. He spoke his mind to Lang: "The power of the Word is still concealed, or else you pay too little heed to it. This surprises me greatly. We are just the same as before, hard, unfeeling, impatient, sinful, intemperate, lascivious and combative, in short, the mark of the Christian, true charity, is nowhere to be found. Paul's words are fulfilled in us: We have God's Word on our lips, but not in power (cp. 1 Cor. iv. 20)."[3] In 1524 Lang married the rich widow of an Erfurt fuller.

Those who had been unfaithful to their vows and priestly

[1] Janssen, "Hist. of German People," 3, p. 248.
[2] To Lang, December 18, 1521 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 256).
[3] On March 28, 1522, *ibid.*, p. 323.

obligations, and then acted as preachers of the new faith, gave the greatest scandal by their conduct.

Many letters dating from 1522, 1523 and 1524, written by Lutheran Humanists such as Eobanus Hessus, Euricius Cordus and Michael Nossenus, who, with disgust, were observing their behaviour, bore witness to the general deterioration of morals in the town, more particularly among the escaped monks and nuns.[1] "I see," Luther himself wrote to Erfurt, "that monks are leaving in great numbers for no other reason than for their belly's sake and for the freedom of the flesh."[2]

Meanwhile, discussions were held in the Erfurt circle of the semi-theologian Lang, on the absence of free-will in man and on "the evil that God does." Lang applied to Luther for help. "I see that you are idlers," was his reply, "though the devil provides you with abundance of occupation in what he plots amongst you. You must not argue concerning the evil that God does. It is not, as you fancy, the work of God, but a ceasing to work on God's part. We desire what is evil when He ceases to work in us and leaves our nature free to fulfil its own wickedness. Where He works the result is ever good. Scripture speaks of such ceasing to work on God's part as a 'hardening.' Thus evil cannot be wrought [by God], since it is nothing ('*malum non potest fieri, cum sit nihil*'), but it arises because what is good is neglected, or prevented."

This was one of the ethical doctrines proclaimed by Luther and Melanchthon which lay at the back of the new theory of good works. Luther enlarged on it in startling fashion in his book "*De servo arbitrio*" (above, p. 223 ff.).

Bartholomew Usingen, the learned and pious Augustinian, who had once been Luther's professor and had enjoyed his especial esteem, witnessed with pain and sadness the changes in the town and in his own priory. The former University professor, now an aged man, fearlessly took his place in the yet remaining Catholic pulpits, par-

[1] Cp. above, p. 123 ff., and Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des d. Volkes," 2^{18}, p. 565, where reference is made to the letters of Eobanus Hessus: "He speaks of the increase of crime and the executions which took place almost daily; for instance, that of a father who had dishonoured his own daughter; the prisons did not suffice for the number of criminals." Nossenus remained with Lang.

[2] In letter last referred to, p. 323 f.

ticularly at St. Mary's, assured of the support and respect of the staunch members of the fold who flocked in numbers to hear him. There he protested against the new doctrines and the growing licentiousness, though he too had to submit to unheard-of insults, abuse and even violent interruptions of his sermons when emissaries of the Lutherans succeeded in forcing their way in. He also laboured against religious innovations with his pen.

"If we are taught," says Usingen, "that faith alone can save us, that good works are of no avail for salvation and do not merit a reward for us in heaven, who will then take the trouble to perform them?—Why exhort men even to do what is right if we have no free-will? And who will be diligent in keeping the commandments of God if the people are taught that they cannot possibly be kept, and that Christ has already fulfilled them perfectly for us?"[1]

Usingen points out to the preachers, especially to Johann Culsamer, the noisiest of them all: "The fruits of your preaching, the excesses and scandals which spring from it, are known to the whole world; then indeed shall the people exert themselves to tame their passions when they are told repeatedly that by faith alone all sin is blotted out, and that confession is no longer necessary. Adultery, unchastity, theft, blasphemy, calumny and such other vices increase to an alarming extent, as unfortunately we see with our own eyes (' *patet per quotidianum exercitium* ')."[2]

"The effect of your godless preaching is," he says, on another occasion, "that the faithful no longer perform any works of mercy, and for this reason the poor are heard to complain bitterly of you."[3] "The rich no longer trouble about the needy, since they are told in sermons that faith alone suffices for salvation and that good works are not meritorious. The clergy, who formerly distributed such abundant alms from the convents and foundations, are no longer in a position to continue these works of charity because, owing to your attacks, their means have been so greatly reduced."[4]

The worthy Augustinian had shown especial marks of favour to his pupil Lang, and it grieved him all the more deeply that he, by the boundless animosity he exhibited in his discourses, should have set an example to the other preachers in the matter of abuse, whether of the Orders, the clergy or the Papacy. He said to him in 1524, "I recalled you from exile [i.e. transferred you from Wittenberg to the *studium generale* at Erfurt] . . . and this is the distinction you have won for yourself; you were the cause of the Erfurt monks leaving their monastery; there had

[1] N. Paulus, "Bartholomäus von Usingen," p. 92, n. 2–4.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 91, n. 1. [3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 90, n. 2.

been fourteen apostasies and now yours makes the fifteenth; like the dragon of the Apocalypse when he fell from heaven, you dragged down with you the third part of the stars."[1]

Usingen mentions the "report," possibly exaggerated, that at one time some three hundred apostate monks were in residence at Erfurt; many ex-nuns were daily to be seen wandering about the streets.[2] Most of these auxiliaries who had flocked to the town in search of bread, were uneducated clerics who drew upon themselves the scorn of the Humanists belonging to the new faith. Any of these clerics who were capable of speaking in public, by preference devoted themselves to invective. Usingen frequently reproached his foes with their scurrility in the pulpit, their constant attacks on the sins and crimes of the clergy, and their violent reprobation and abuse of institutions and customs held in universal veneration for ages, all of which could only exercise a pernicious influence on morality. "Holy Scripture," he says in a work against the two preachers Culsamer and Mechler, "commands the preacher to point out their sins to the people and to exhort them to amendment. But the new preaching does not speak to the people of their faults but only of the sins of the clergy, and thus the listener forgets his own sins and leaves the church worse than he entered it." And elsewhere: "Invective was formerly confined to the viragoes of the market-place, but now it flourishes in the churches." "Even your own hearers are weary of your everlasting slanders. Formerly, they say, the gospel was preached to us, but such abuse and calumny was not then heard in the pulpit."[3]

It could not be but regarded as strange that Luther himself, forgetful of his former regard, went so far as to egg on his pupils and friends at Erfurt against his old professor. Usingen certainly had never anticipated such treatment at his hands. "He has, as you know," Luther wrote to Lang, on June 26, "become hard-headed and full of ingrained obstinacy and conceit. Therefore, in your preaching, you must draw down upon his folly the contempt that such coarse and inflated blindness deserves." As from his early years he had never been known to yield to anyone,

[1] "Bartholomäus von Usingen," p. 16, 54 f. Cp. Oergel, "Vom jungen Luther," p. 132.

[2] Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 100, n. 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 93 f.

Luther gave up the hope of seeing the stubborn sophist "yield to Christ"; he sees here the confirmation of the proverb: "No fool like an old fool."[1]

Carried away by his success at Erfurt, Luther urged the preachers not to allow their energies to flag.

It is true that in an official Circular-Letter to the Erfurt Congregation, despatched on July 10, 1522, and intended for publication, his tone is comparatively calm; the superscription is: "Martin Luther, Ecclesiastes of Wittenberg, to all the Christians at Erfurt together with the preachers and ministers, Grace and Peace in Christ Jesus, Our Lord."[2] Therein, at Lang's request, dealing with the controversy which had arisen at Erfurt regarding the veneration of the Saints, he declares that whilst there was certainly no warrant of Scripture for Saint-worship, it ought not to be assailed with violence (i.e. not after the fashion of the fanatics whose doings were a public danger). He trusts "we shall be the occasion of no rising" and points to his own example as showing with what moderation he had ever proceeded against the Papists: "As yet I have not moved a finger against them, and Christ has destroyed them with the sword of His mouth" (2 Thess. ii. 8).[3] "Leave Christ to act" in true faith—such is the gist of his exhortation in this letter so admirably padded with Pauline phrases—but despise and avoid the "stiff-necked sophists"; "Whoever stinks, let him go on stinking." He concludes, quite in the Pauline manner: "May Our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you together with us in all the fulness of the knowledge of Himself to the honour of His Father, Who is also ours, to Whom be Glory for ever and ever, Amen. Greet Johann Lang [and the other preachers]: George Forchheim, Johann Culhamer, Antony Musam, Ægidius Mechler and Peter Bamberger. Philip, Jonas and all our people greet you. The Grace of God be with you all, Amen."[4]

But when Luther, at the instance of Duke Johann of Saxony and his son Johann Frederick, came to Erfurt, in October, 1522, accompanied by Melanchthon, Agricola and

[1] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 403.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 164 ff.; Erl. ed., 53, p. 139 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 431).
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 167=143.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 168=144.

Jacob Probst, and proceeded to address the multitude who flocked to hear him (October 21 and 22), he was unable to restrain his passion, and, by his words of fire, fanned the hatred and blind fanaticism of the mob to the highest pitch.

He scolded the clergy as "fat and lazy priestlings and monks," who "hitherto had carried on their deceitful trade throughout the whole world," and upon whom "everything had been bestowed." "So far they have mightily fattened their great paunches." "Of what use were their brotherhoods, indulgence-letters and all their countless trickeries?" "Ah, it must have cost the devil much labour to establish the ecclesiastical Estate. . . . Alas for these oil-pots who can do nothing but anoint people, wash walls and baptise bells!" But the believer is "Lord over Pope and devil and all such powers, and is also a judge of this delusion."

And yet in remarkable contrast to all this, in his closing words, spoken with greater ponderance, he exhorts the people "not to despise their enemies even though they know not Christ, but to have patience with them." Yet before this he had declared: "We must crush the fiendish head of this brood with the Evangel. Then the Pope will lose his crown." He had also preached against the secular authority exercised at Erfurt by the Archbishop of Mayence: "Our Holy Fathers and reverend lords, who have the spiritual sword as well as the temporal, want to be our rulers and masters. It is plain they have not got even the spiritual sword, and certainly God never gave them the temporal. Therefore it is only right, that, as they have exalted their government so greatly, it should be greatly humbled."[1]

Amidst all this he has not a single word of actual blame for the former acts of violence, but merely a few futile platitudes on peaceableness, such as: "We do not wish to preserve the Evangel by our own efforts," for it is sufficiently strong to see to itself. He assures his hearers that, "he was not concerned how to defend it."[2] Yet he sets up each of his followers as "king" and "yoke-fellow of Christ," having the Royal Priesthood so that they may defy the Hierarchy, "who have stolen the sword out of our hands." All this while expressly professing to proclaim the great and popular doctrine of faith and Bible only.

"You have been baptised and endowed with the true faith, therefore you are spiritual and able to judge of all things by the word of the Evangel, and are not to be judged of any man. . . . Say: My faith is founded on Christ alone and His Word, not on the Pope or on any Councils. . . . My faith is here a judge and may say: This doctrine is true, but that is false and evil. And the Pope and all his crew, nay, all men on earth, must submit to that decision. . . . Therefore I say: Whoever has faith is a spiritual man and judge of all things, and is himself judged of no

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 13, 3, p. 358–61, 362 ff.; Erl. ed., 16^2, pp. 445, 446, 447, 451, 454, 460, 461. [2] p. 354=439.

man . . . the Pope owes him obedience, and, were he a true Christian, would prostrate himself at his feet, and so too would every University, learned man or sophist."[1]

All depends on one thing, namely, whether this believer "judges according to the Evangel," i.e. according to the new interpretation of Scripture which Luther has disclosed.

We naturally think of Usingen and those Erfurt professors who remained faithful to the Church when Luther, in the course of his sermon, in sarcastic language, pits his new interpretation of Scripture against the "sophists, birettas and skull-caps." "Bang the mouths of the sophists to [when they cry]: '*Papa Papa, Concilium, Concilium, Patres, Patres,* Universities, Universities.' What on earth do we care about that? one word of God is more than all this."[2] "Let them go on with all their sermons and their dreams!" "Let us see what such bats will do with their feather-brooms!"[3]

The commanding tone in which he spoke and the persuasive force of his personality were apt to make his hearers forgetful of the fact, that, after all, his great pretensions rested on his own testimony alone. In the general excitement the objections, which he himself had the courage to bring forward, seemed futile: "Were not Christ and the Gospel preached before? Do you fancy," he replies, "that we are not aware of what is meant by Gospel, Christ and Faith?"[4]

It was of the utmost importance to him that, on this occasion of his appearance at Erfurt, he should make the whole weight of his personal authority felt so as to stem betimes the flood let loose by others who taught differently; he was determined to impress the seal of his own spirit upon the new religious system at this important outpost.

Even before this he had let fall some words in confidence to Lang expressive of his concern that, at Erfurt, as it seemed to him, they wished to outstrip him in the knowledge of the Word, so that he felt himself decreasing while others increased (John iii. 30),[5] and in the Circular-Letter above mentioned, he had anxiously warned the Erfurt believers against those who, confiding in their "peculiar wisdom," were desirous of teaching "something besides Christ and beyond our preaching."[6] Now, personally present at the place where danger threatened, he insists from the pulpit with great emphasis on his mission: "It was not I who put myself forward. . . . Christ Our Master when sending His apostles out into the world to preach gave them no other directions than to preach the Gospel . . . when He makes a man a preacher and apostle He also in His gracious condescension gives him instructions how to speak and what to speak, even down to the present day." Those who heard

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 13, 3, p. 359=445 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 359 f.=446.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 354=440.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 364 f.=453.
[5] On March 28, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 323.
[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 167; Erl. ed., 53, p. 143.

him were therefore to believe for certain "that he was not preaching what was his, but, like the apostles, the Word of God."[1]

Many of his hearers were all the more likely to overlook the strange pretensions herein embodied, seeing that a large portion of his discourse proclaimed the sweet doctrine of evangelical freedom and denounced good works.

For the latter purpose he very effectively introduces the Catholic preachers, putting into their mouths the assertion, falsely credited to them, that "only works and man's justice" availed anything, not "Christ and His Justice"; for they say, "faith is not sufficient, it is also necessary to fast, to pray, to build churches, to found monasteries, monkeries and nunneries, and so forth." But "they will be knocked on the head and recoil, and be convicted of the fact, that they know nothing whatever of what concerns Christ, the Gospel and good works." "We cannot become pious and righteous by our own works, if we could we should be striking Paul a blow on the mouth." These "dream-preachers" speak in vain of "Works, fasting and prayer," but you are a Christian if you believe that Christ is for you wisdom and righteousness. "The doctrine of those who are called Christians must not come from man, or proceed from man's efforts. . . . Therefore a Christian life is not promoted by our fasting, prayers, cowls or anything that we may undertake."[2]

He returns again and again to the belief, so deeply rooted in the heart, of the efficacy of good works in order that he may uproot it completely. The whole Christian system demands, he thinks, the condemnation of the importance attached hitherto to good works. "Thus the whole of Christianity consists in your holding fast to the Evangel, which Christ alone ordains and teaches, not to human words or works."[3] It is a "devil" who speaks to you of the meritorious power of works, "not indeed a black or painted devil, but a white devil, who, under a beautiful semblance of life, infuses into you the poison of eternal death."[4] Of the Christian who relies only on faith, he says, "Christ's innocence becomes his innocence, and in the same way Christ's piety, holiness and salvation become his, and all that is in Christ is contained in the believing heart together with Christ."[5] "But such faith is awakened in us by God. From it spring the works by which we assist and serve our neighbour."[6]

He speaks at considerable length in the last part of his sermons of the particular works which he considers allowable and commendable. How much he wished to imply may, however, be inferred from what has gone before.

Shall we not do good works? Shall we not pray any more, fast, found monasteries, become monks or nuns, or do similar works? The answer is: "There are two kinds of good works, some which are looked upon as good," i.e. "our own self-chosen

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 13, 3, p. 361=16², p. 452.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 365 f.=452–4. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 370=461.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*, p. 356=442. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 357=443.

works," such as "special fasting, special prayers, wearing a special dress or joining an Order." "None of this is ordained by God," and "Christian faith looks to nothing save Christ only," therefore these works we must leave severely alone. There are, on the other hand, works which are better than these. "When once we have laid hold upon Christ, then good Christian works follow, such as God has commanded and which man performs not for his own advantage but in the service of his neighbour." But even of these works Luther is careful to add that they should be performed "without placing any trust in them for justification." "Fasting is a good work," but then, "the devil himself does not eat too much," and sometimes even "a Jew" fasts; "prayer is also a good work," but it does not consist in "much mumbling or shouting," and even "the Turk prays much with his lips." "No one may or can bear the name of Christian except by the work of Christ."[1]

Thus, even where he is forced to admit good works, he must needs add a warning.

Finally, where he is exhorting to the patient bearing of crosses, he immediately, and most strangely, restricts this exercise of virtue to the limits of his own experience: One bears the cross when he is unjustly proclaimed "a heretic and evil-doer," not "when he is sick in bed"; to bear the cross is to be "deprived of interior consolation," and to be severely tried by "God's hand and by His anger."[2]

In the new congregation at Erfurt it was a question of the very foundations of the moral life. Yet in Luther's addresses we miss the necessary exhortations to a change of heart, to struggle against the passions and overcome sensuality. Neither is the sinner exhorted to repentance, penance, contrition, fear of God and a firm purpose of amendment, nor are the more zealous encouraged to the active exercise of the love of God, to self-denial according to the virtues of their state, or to sanctification by the use of those means which Luther still continued to recognise, at least to a certain extent, such as the Eucharist. All his exhortations merge into this one thing, trust in Christ. He preached, indeed, one part of the sermon of the Precursor, viz. "The Kingdom of God is at hand"; with the other: "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance," he would have nothing to do.

As far as the change at Erfurt went, the moral condition of the town was to serve more than ever as a refutation of Luther's expectation that "the works will follow."

On January 24, 1524, Eobanus Hessus wrote to Lang: "Immorality, corruption of youth, contempt of learning and dissensions, such are the fruits of your Evangel."[3] "I

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 13, 3, pp. 363, 366 f. = 455 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 368 = 458.
[3] Cp. Paulus, "Usingen," p. 94, n. 2.

dislike being here very much," he says, in the same year, to his friend Sturz, "since all is lost, for there is now no hope of a revival of learning or of a recovery in public life. Everything is on the road to destruction, and we ourselves are rendered odious to all classes by reason of some unlearned deserters. "Oh, unhappy Erfurt," he cries, in view of the "outrageous behaviour of these godless men of God"; one seeks to oppress the other; already the battlefield of passion is tinged with "blood."[1]

"You have by your preaching called forth a diabolical life in the town," Usingen wrote in 1524 of the preachers at Erfurt, "although this is now displeasing to you, and you encourage it even up to the present day; you set the people free from the obedience which, according to the Divine command, they owe to the authorities of the Church, you deprive the people of the fear both of God and of man, hence the corruption of morals, which increases from day to day."[2]

Usingen, who continued courageously to vindicate the faith of his fathers, was depicted by the preachers as a "crazy old man," just as they had been advised to do by Luther. "I am quite pleased to hear," Luther wrote to Lang some considerable time after his return, "that this 'Unsingen' is still carrying on his fooleries; as the Apostle Paul says, their folly must be made manifest (2 Tim. iii. 9)."[3]

The champion of the Church, the alleged fool, was sufficiently clear-sighted and frank to predict the Peasant-War as the end of all the godless commotion, and to prophesy that the result of the general religious subversion would be the ruin of his German Fatherland. A fanatical preacher in the town had appealed to the mattocks of the peasants. Him the Augustinian asks: "If the Word of God suffices in the Church, why have you in your sermons appealed for help to the pickaxes, mattocks and spades of the peasants?" "Why do you tell the people that the peasant must come from the field with these weapons to assist the Evangel, if your own and your comrades' words prove of no avail? Do you not know with what audacity the peasants are already rising against their lords?" "The new preaching,"

[1] Cp. Paulus, "Usingen," p. 100, n. 2. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 91, n. 4.
[3] In the first half of November, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 27: "*Unsingen insanire lubens audio*," etc.

he complains, even where it is not directly inflammatory, "renders the people, who are already desirous of innovations and dearly love the freedom of the flesh, only too much inclined for tumults, and this daily foments the spirit of unrest."[1] "Do you not know that the mob is a hydra-headed monster, a monster that thirsts for blood? Are you anxious to promote your cause with the help of cut-throats?"[2] Owing to the iconoclasts, the ancient greatness of Constantinople fell, and the Roman Empire of the East faded away; in like manner, so gloomily he predicts, the religious struggle now being waged in Germany will bring about the ruin of the Western Empire and the loss of its ancient greatness.[3]

The help which the innovators received from the Erfurt magistrates induced the leaders of the party to pin their trust on the support of the secular authorities. Even this was justified by appeals to Scripture.

Lang, on presenting to Hermann von Hoff, the president of the Erfurt town-council, a translation which he had made of the Gospel of St. Matthew, stated in the accompanying letter, that he had done so "in order that all may know and take heed to the fact, that whatever they undertake against the Gospel is also directed against you. It is necessary, unfortunately, to defend the Gospel by means of the sword."[4]

In July, 1521, an agreement had, it is true, been entered into which brought some guarantee of safety to the clergy, more particularly the Canons of St. Mary's and St. Severus, yet in the ensuing years the Chapters were forced to make endless protests against the preachers' interference in their services and the encroachments of the magistrates on their personal liberty, all in direct contravention of the agreement.

The council demanded that the oath of obedience should be taken to itself and not to the Archbishop of Mayence, as heretofore. Priests were arrested on charges which did not concern the council at all, and were taken to the Rathaus. The clergy were obliged to pay taxes like other citizens on all farms and property which belonged to them or to their churches—which had been exempt from time immemorial—and likewise on any treasure or cash they might possess. When the peasants threatened Erfurt, the clergy were advised to bring all the valuables belonging to their churches to the Rathaus where the council, in

[1] Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 102, n. 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 102, n. 4.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 101, n. 2.
[4] Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 35.

view of the danger of the times, would receive them into safe custody, giving in return formal receipts. Since the council, as guardians of several monasteries, including St. Peter's, had already appointed laymen who hindered the lawful Superiors from coming to any independent decision in matters of any moment, and as all the chalices and other vessels of gold and silver, together with the more valuable Church vestments, had already been seized at the Servites, the Brothers of the Rule and the Carthusians, the Canons saw how futile it would be to reject the "advice" given, and they accordingly decided to deliver up the more valuable objects belonging to the two principal churches, St. Mary's and St. Severus, their decision being accepted by the council with "hearty thanks." At the formal surrender of the vessels the magistrates protested that the Canons were really not fully aware how well disposed they, the magistrates, were towards them; that they had no wish to drive away the clergy, "but rather to show them all charity so that they might return thanks to God." Yet we learn also that: Many persons belonging to the council whispered that it was their intention to make the position of the clergy unbearable by means of this and other like acts of despoliation.[1]

On April 27, 1525, on the occasion of the taking over of the treasure, with the co-operation of persons "distinguished for their strong Lutheran views," a strict search was made in both the venerable churches for anything of any value that might have been left. Not the least consideration was paid to the private property of the individual clergy, objects were seized in the most violent manner, locked chests and cupboards were simply forced open, or, if this took too long, broken with axes. Every hasp of silver on copes and elsewhere was torn off. "Unclean fists," says a contemporary narrator, "seized the chalices and sacred vessels, which they had no right to touch, and carried them with loud jeers in buckets and baskets to places where they were dishonoured." As in other churches and convents, the books and papers on which any claims of the clergy against the council might be based were selected with special care. While precious works of art were thus being consigned to destruction,[2] members of the town-council were consoling the Canons by renewed assurances, that the council "would protect both their life and their property." Finally, the two churches were closely watched for some while after, "lest something might still be preserved in them, and to prevent such being taken possession of by the clergy."[3]

When, in 1525, on the news of the Peasant Rising in

[1] See Th. Eitner, "Erfurt und die Bauernaufstände im 16. Jahrhundert," Halle, 1903, p. 58 f. This writing, which is also printed in the "Mitteilungen des Vereins für Gesch. und Altertumskunde von Erfurt," 24, 1903, p. 3–108, is founded on detailed studies of the archives and local history, and has been made the basis of the following account.

[2] Present work, vol. v., xxx. 6. [3] Eitner, *ibid.*, p. 57–60.

Swabia and Franconia, meetings were held by the peasants in the Erfurt district, the adherents of the movement determined to enforce by violence their demands even at Erfurt. Those in the town who sympathised with Luther made common cause with the rebels.[1] The magistrates were undecided. They were not as yet exclusively Lutheran, but were anxious to make the town independent of the Archbishop of Mayence, and to secure for themselves the property and rights of the clergy. For the most part the lower orders were unfavourable to the magistrates, and therefore sided with the peasantry.

The peasants from the numerous villages which were politically regarded as belonging to the Erfurt district demanded that they should be emancipated from the burdens which they had to bear, and placed on a footing of social equality with the lower class of Erfurt burghers. With this they joined, as had been done elsewhere, religious demands in the sense of Luther's innovations. The movement was publicly inaugurated by fourteen villages at a meeting held in a beerhouse on April 25 or 26, 1525, at which the peasants bound themselves by an oath taken with "uplifted right hand," at the risk of their lives "to support the Word of God and to combine to abolish the old obsolete imposts." When warned not to go to Erfurt, one of the leaders replied: "God has enlightened us, we shall not remain, but go forward." As soon as they had come to an agreement as to their demands concerning the taxes "and other heavy burdens which the Evangel was to assist them to get rid of," they collected in arms around the walls of Erfurt.[2] The magistrates then took counsel how to divert the threatening storm and direct it against the clergy and the hated authorities of Mayence. The remembrance of the "Pfaffensturm" which, in 1521, had served as a means to allay the social grievances, was an encouragement to adopt a similar course. As intermediary between council and peasants, Hermann von Hoff, who has been mentioned above as an opponent of the Catholic clergy and the rights

[1] Cp. also Janssen. *Ibid.*, 4, p. 301 f.: "The Erfurt preachers had for years long been among the most violent agitators in town and country. . . . On the news of the insurrection in Swabia and Franconia several gatherings of peasants were held in the Erfurt district in the spring, 1525," etc.

[2] Eitner, p. 33 f., pp. 43, 48.

of Mayence, took a leading part; one of his principles was that "it is necessary to make use of every means, sweet as well as bitter, if we are to allay so great a commotion and to avert further mischief."[1]

In their perplexity the magistrates, through the agency of Hoff, admitted the horde of peasants, only stipulating that they should spare the property of the burghers, though they were to be free to plunder the Palace of the Archbishop of Mayence, the "hereditary lord" of the city, and also the toll-house. The peasants made their entry on April 28 with that captain of the town whom Lang had invited to draw the sword in the cause of the Evangel. Not only was the Palace despoiled and the toll-house utterly destroyed, but the salt warehouses and almost all the parsonages were attacked and looted. In the name of "evangelical freedom" the plunderers vented all their fury on the sacred vessels, pictures and relics they were still able to find.

"In the Archbishop's Palace Lutheran preachers, for instance, Eberlin of Günzburg, Mechler and Lang, mixed with the rabble of the town and country and preached to them." The preachers made no secret of being "in league with the peasantry and the proletariate of the town." The clergy and religious were, however, to be made "to feel still more severely"[2] the effects of the alliance between the three parties.

At the first coming of the peasants, that quarters might be found for them, "all the convents of monks and nuns were confiscated and their inhabitants driven out into the street." "Alas, how wretched did the poor nuns look passing up and down the alleys of the town,"[3] says an eye-witness in an Erfurt chronicle. All those connected with the Collegiate churches of St. Mary and St. Severus had peasants billeted on them in numbers out of all proportion to their means. On the morning of April 28, the service in the church of St. Mary's was violently interrupted. On the following Sunday, Eberlin, the apostate Franciscan, commenced a course of sermons, which he continued for several days with his customary vehemence and abuse.

[1] Eitner, p. 68. According to Eitner we learn from local sources, "that, in view of the state of affairs, the council thought it the most prudent course to do as in 1521, and to set the peasants and the citizens against the common foe, the clergy of Mayence, in order thus to satisfy the coarser instincts of the mob and to divert their thoughts from dangerous projects."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 70, n. 1.

Exactly a week after the coming of the peasants they passed a resolution in the Mainzer Hof that the number of parishes should be reduced to ten, including the Collegiate church of St. Mary's, and that in all these parish churches "the pure Word of God should be preached without any additions, man-made laws, decrees or doctrines." As for the pastors, they were to be appointed and removed by the congregation. This was equivalent to sentencing the old worship to death. On the same day an order was issued to all the parish churches and monasteries to abstain in future from reciting or singing Matins, Vespers or Mass. The only man who was successful in evading the prohibition was Dr. Conrad Klinge, the courageous guardian of the Franciscans, who at the hospital continued to preach in the old way to crowded audiences.

Most of the beneficed clergy now quitted the town, as the council refused to undertake any responsibility on their behalf; and as they were forbidden to resume Divine Worship or even to celebrate Mass in private, at the gate of the town they were subjected to a thorough search lest they should have any priestly property concealed about them. The magistrates sought to extort from the clergy who remained, admissions which might serve as some justification for their conduct. The post of preacher at the Dom, after it had been refused by Eberlin, who had at length taken fright at the demagogic spirit now abroad, was bestowed upon one of Luther's immediate followers; the new preacher was Dr. Johann Lang, an "apostate, renegade, uxorious monk," as a contemporary chronicler calls him.

All tokens of any authority of the Archbishop of Mayence in the town were obliterated, and the archiepiscopal jurisdiction was declared to be at an end. Eobanus Hessus wrote gleefully of the ruin of the "popish" foe. "We have driven away the Bishop of Mayence, for ever. All the monks have been expelled, the nuns turned out, the canons sent away, all the temples and even the money-boxes in the churches plundered; the commonwealth is now established and taxes and customs houses have been done away with. Again we are now free."[1] Here the statement that the clergy of Mayence had been expelled "for ever" proved incorrect, for the rights of the over-lord were soon to be re-established.

The magistrates were the first to fall; they were deposed, and the lower-class burghers and the peasants replaced them by two committees, one to represent the town, the other the country. In the latter committee the excited ringleaders of the peasantry gave vent to threatening speeches against the former municipal government, and such wild words as "Kill these spectres, blow out their brains" were heard.[2]

The actual wording of the resolutions passed by both the committees was principally the work of preachers of the new faith. Eberlin, too, was consulted as to how best to draw up

[1] Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. trans.), 4, p. 304.
[2] Eitner, p. 85 f.

" the articles in accordance with the Bible," but he cautiously declined to have anything to do with this, and declared that their demands seemed to him to be exorbitant and that, " the Evangel would not help them." The Lutheran preachers also exerted themselves to bring about the reinstatement of the magistrates. It is said that on April 30, in every quarter of the town, a minister of the new doctrine preached to the citizens and country people to the following effect: " You have now by your good and Christian acts and deeds emancipated yourselves altogether from the Court at Mayence and its jurisdiction, which, according to Divine justice and Holy Scripture, should have no temporal authority whatever. But in order that this freedom may not lead you astray, there must be some authorities over you, and therefore you must for the future recognise the worthy magistrates of Erfurt as your rulers," etc.[1]

The words of the preachers prevailed, and the newly elected councillors became the head of a sort of republic. The burdens of the town increased to an oppressive extent, however, and the peasants who had returned to their villages groaned more than ever under the weight of the taxes. Financial difficulties continued to increase.

Yielding to the pressure of circumstances, the councillors gave their sanction on May 9, 1525, " under the new seal," to the amended articles, twenty-eight in number, which had been drafted by the town and peasant committees during the days of storm and stress. The very first article made obligatory the preaching of " the pure Word of God," and gave to each congregation the right to choose its own pastors. " The gist of the remaining articles was the appointment of a permanent administrative council to give a yearly account, and to impose no new taxes without the knowledge and sanction of both burghers and country subjects."

In accepting the articles it was agreed that Luther's opinion on them should be ascertained, a decision which seems to show that the peasants and burghers, though probably not the councillors themselves, reckoned upon the weighty sanction of Wittenberg. Yet about May 4 Luther had finished his booklet " Against the murderous Peasants " (above p. 201), which was far from favourable to seditious

[1] " The peasant rising in the neighbourhood of Erfurt did nothing but harm [from the material point of view]. A phase in the business decay of the once flourishing community, a desperate attempt to mend what was wrong by what was worse, it merely sapped the strength of the town and so prepared the way for the event which some hundred and forty years later robbed her for ever of her political independence " (Eitner, *ibid.*, p. 108).

movements such as that of Erfurt. The council invited him by letter, on May 10, to come to Erfurt with Melanchthon "and establish the government of the town," as Melanchthon puts it ("*ad constituendum urbis statum*").[1] Luther, however, did not accept the invitation, and a month later the council sent him a copy of the articles, requesting a written opinion. It is difficult to believe that the Erfurt magistrates were not aware of Luther's growing bitterness against the peasants, which is attested by the pamphlets he wrote at the time, or that they were incapable of drawing the obvious conclusion as to his reply.[2] "If the council in taking this step," says Eitner, "was relying on Luther's known attitude towards all revolutionary movements, and hoped to make an end of the inconvenient demands of the people by means of the Reformer's powerful words, then their expectation was fully realised. Both Luther's letter (i.e. his answer to the council) and his written notes on the copy of the articles sent him, are full of irony expressing the displeasure of one whose advice was so much in request, but whose interference in the peasant movement, in spite of his good intentions, had thus far met with so little success. . . . The very articles which the authors had most at heart were submitted by Luther to a relentless and somewhat pointless criticism. . . . Thus we see in a comparatively trivial case what has long been acknowledged of his action generally, viz. that Luther's interference in the Peasant-War cannot be altogether justified. . . . His conduct shattered his reputation, both in the empire and in his second native town [Erfurt], and paved the way for the inevitable reaction."[3]

Luther, in his reply to the "Honourable, prudent and beloved" members of the Erfurt council,[4] declares

[1] It is thus that Melanchthon describes the object of the invitation in a letter to Camerarius of May 19, 1525, "Corp. reform.," 1, p. 744.

[2] It is true that the council declared on this occasion "that it was by no means its mind, desire or intention to oppress the people without necessity, contrary to evangelical equity and right, or to refuse them anything which it was its duty to permit or tolerate." Eitner, *ibid.*, 2, p. 93, where he remarks: "It will probably be best not to attribute any duplicity to the councillors."

[3] Eitner, *ibid.*, p. 94.

[4] On September 19 (according to Enders), 1525, in "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 59, and Erl. ed., 56, p. xii. ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 243). The first sentences quoted are contained in the letter itself, the others in the marginal notes to the various articles, which in De Wette's collection are printed together with the articles themselves after the letter.

in the very first sentences that the Twenty-eight Articles were so "ill-advised" that "little good could come of them" even were he present himself at Erfurt; he is of opinion that certain people, who "are better off than they deserve," are putting on airs at the expense of the council, constitute a danger to the common weal, and, with "unheard-of audacity and wickedness," wish to "turn things upside down." Things must never be permitted to come to such a pass that the councillors fear the common people and become their servants; the common people must be quiet and entrust all to the honourable magistrates to be set right, "lest the Princes have occasion to take up arms against Erfurt on account of such unwarrantable conduct." Luther's new sovereign, the Elector Johann, had just been assisting in the suppression of the peasant rising. He was in entire sympathy with the Wittenberg Professor, whom he so openly protected and favoured, and doubtless they had discussed together the state of affairs at Erfurt. In his written reply Luther asks whether it is not "seditious" to refuse to pay the Elector the sum due to him for acting as protector of the city. "Did they, then, esteem so lightly the Prince and the security of the town, which, as a matter of fact, was something not to be paid for in money?" Their demand really signified either that "no one was to protect the town of Erfurt, or that the Princes were to relinquish their claim to payment and yet continue to protect the town."

The demand that the congregations of the parishes should appoint their own pastors Luther considered particularly inadmissible; it was "seditious that the parishes should wish to appoint and dismiss their own pastors without reference to the councillors, as though the councillors, in whom authority was vested, were not concerned in what the town might do." He insists that "the councillors have the right to know what sort of persons are holding office in the town."

Concerning some of the articles which dealt with taxes and imposts, he points out that the business is not his concern, since these are temporal matters. Of the proposal to re-establish the decayed University of Erfurt he says: "This article is the best of all." Of two of the articles he notes: "Both these will do," one being that, for the future,

openly immoral persons and prostitutes of all classes were not to be tolerated, nor the common houses of public women, and the other, that every debtor, whether to the council or the community, should be "faithfully admonished no matter who he might be." Concerning the former of these two articles, however, we may remark, that a house of correction for the punishment of light women had existed at Erfurt under the Archbishop's rule, but had been razed to the ground by the very framers of the articles as soon as the peasants entered the town.

The principal thing, in Luther's opinion, was to place the reins in the hands of the magistrates, so that they may not sit there like an "idol," "bound hand and foot," "while the horses saddle and bridle their driver"; on the contrary, the aim of the articles seemed to him to be, to reduce the councillors to be mere figureheads, and to let "the rabble manage everything."[1] The "rabble" was just then Luther's bugbear.

The clergy who had quitted the city addressed, on May 30, a written complaint to the Cardinal of Mayence, with an account of the proceedings. On June 8 they also appealed to Johann, the Saxon Elector, and to Duke George of Saxony, asking for their mediation, since they were the "protectors and liege lords" of their Church. They also did all they could with the council to recover their rights. The councillors were, however, merely rude, and replied that the proud priests might ask as much as they pleased but would get no redress. This was what caused them to complain to their secular protectors that they were being treated worse than the meanest peasant. Duke George advised them to await the result of the negotiations which, as he knew, were proceeding between the town of Erfurt and the Cardinal.

The Lutheran Elector, on the other hand, entered into closer relations with the town-council of Erfurt, accepting with good grace their appeal for help, their protestation of submission and obedience to his rule, and the explicit assurance of the councillors at the Weimar conference, on

[1] This is Luther's disdainful note to Art. 7, in itself a quite reasonable one, viz. "That the present councillors shall give an account of all expenditure and receipts." His dislike for the "rabble" here made Luther unjust, and not here alone. His question concerning Art. 6 (on the protection of the "wards and trades") is not to the point: "If councillors are not trusted, why appoint them?"

June 22, " that they would stand by the true and unfeigned Word of God as pious and faithful Christians, and, in support of the same, stake life and limb, with the help of God's grace." Thereupon the Elector promised them, on June 23, that, " should they suffer any inconvenience or attack because of the Word of God," he, as their " liege lord, ruler and protector," would " stand by them and afford them protection to the best of his ability," since " the Word of God and the Holy Evangel were likewise dear to him." In point of fact he did espouse the cause of the inhabitants of Erfurt, though, like Duke George, it was his wish to see a peaceful settlement arrived at between the town and its rightful over-lord.[1]

The crafty councillors were actually negotiating with the representatives of the Cardinal of Mayence at the very time when they were seeking the protection of Saxony. The over-lord whose rights they had outraged, through his vicar, had made known his peremptory demands to the council on May 26, viz. entire restitution, damages, expulsion of the Lutheran sect, re-establishment of the old worship and payment of an indemnity. In the event of refusal he threatened them with the armed interference of the Swabian League. The threat took effect, for the Swabian League at that time was feared, and disturbers of the peace had had occasion to feel its strength. The hint of armed interference proved all the more effective when Duke George advised the inhabitants of Erfurt to come to terms with the Mayence vicar and abolish Lutheranism, as otherwise they would have to expect " something further."

The council therefore assumed a conciliatory attitude towards Mayence, and negotiations concerning the restitution to be made were commenced at a conference at Fulda on August 25, 1525. After protracted delays these terminated with the Treaty of Hammelburg on February 5, 1530. This was, " from the political point of view, an utter defeat for the inhabitants of Erfurt."[2] The council was not only obliged to recognise the supremacy of the Archbishop, but also to re-erect all buildings which had been destroyed, and to return everything that had been misapplied; in addition to this, for the loss of taxes and other revenues, the council was to pay the Archbishop 2500 gulden, and to

[1] Eitner, *ibid.*, pp. 102, 104. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

the two Collegiate churches, for losses sustained, 1200 marks of fine silver. Both these churches were to be handed over for Catholic worship. The reinstated over-lord, however, declared, for his part, that, "As regards the other churches and matters of faith and ritual, we hereby and on this occasion neither give nor take, sanction nor forbid, anything to any party."[1]

Thus the rescinding of the innovations was for the present deferred, and Luther had every reason to be satisfied with what had been effected in a town to which he was attached by many links. How little gratitude he showed to Archbishop Albert, and how fiercely his hatred and animus against the cautious Cardinal would occasionally flame up, will be seen from facts to be mentioned elsewhere.

Among the few Erfurt monks who, though expelled from their monastery, remained true to their profession and to the Church, there was one who attained to a great age and who is mentioned incidentally by Flacius Illyricus. He well remembered the first period of Luther's life in Erfurt, his zeal for the Church and solicitude for the observance of the Rule.[2]

When considering Luther's intervention in Erfurt matters, and his personal action there, one thought obtrudes itself.

When Luther, now quite a different man and in vastly altered circumstances, returned to Erfurt on the occasion of the visit referred to above, is it not likely that he recalled his earlier life at Erfurt, where he had spent happy days of interior contentment, as is shown by the letters he wrote before his priestly ordination? In one of the sermons he delivered there, in October, 1522, he refers to his student days at Erfurt, but it does not appear that he ever seriously

[1] Eitner, *ibid.*, p. 107.

[2] Matthias Flacius, "*Clarissimæ quædam notæ veræ ac falsæ religionis*," 1549 (Vienna Court Library), in showing "Holiness" as a mark sufficiently discernible in Luther's church and person. According to O. Clemen, the Erfurt monastery dragged on a miserable existence until 1525. On July 31 of that year, Adam Horn, the Prior, received from the Vicar-General of the Congregation, Johann von Spangenberg, permission to leave the monastery since he was no longer safe in it. "Aus den letzten Tagen des Erfurter Augustinerklosters," in "Theol. Studien und Kritiken," 1899, p. 278 ff. It may be that Usingen quitted Erfurt at that time for the same reason (above, p. 337). The last trace of Nathin is found at the Chapter of the Order at Leipzig in 1523, at which he represented the Erfurt priory.

reflected on the contrast presented by the convictions he held at that time on the Church and his new ideas on faith and works. His allusions to his Erfurt recollections are neither serious nor grateful towards his old school. He speaks scoffingly of his learned Erfurt opponents, some of whom he had been acquainted with previously, as "knights of straw." "Yes, they prate, we are Doctors and Masters. . . . Well, if a title settles the matter, I also became a Bachelor *here*, and then a Master and then again a Bachelor. I also went to school with them, and I know and am convinced that they do not understand their own books."[1]

Another circumstance must be taken into account. Whereas in later life he can scarcely speak of his early years as a monk without telling his hearers how he had passed from an excessive though purely exterior holiness-by-works to his great discovery, viz. to the knowledge of a gracious God, in 1522 he is absolutely silent regarding these "inward experiences"; yet his very theme, viz. the contrast between the new Evangel and the "sophistical holiness-by-works" preferred by Catholics, and likewise the familiar Erfurt scene of his early life as a monk, should, one would think, have invited him to speak of the matter here.[2]

While Luther was seeking to expel by force the popish "wolves," more especially the monks and nuns, from the places within reach of the new Evangel, an enemy was growing up in his own camp in the shape of the so-called fanatics; their existence can be traced back as far as his Wartburg days, and his first misunderstanding with Carlstadt; these, by their alliance with Carlstadt, who had been won over to their ideas, and with the help of men like Thomas Münzer, had of late greatly increased their power, thanks to the social conditions which were so favourable to their cause.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 353; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 438.

[2] We may here mention what K. A. Meissinger, of Strasburg, says: "The period previous to 1517 has been looked upon as Luther's age of immaturity and shyness, and his own numerous statements on the subject have contributed not a little to this fiction. The legend of Martin, the zealous young Papist, seeking to get to heaven by his monkish practices and wasting away in utter despair, gives (a fact which has become apparent only of recent years) quite a false picture of that decisive and truly momentous period in the inward growth of the great Reformer" ("Der junge Luther," Frankfurter Ztng., 1910, No. 300).

6. Sharp Encounters with the Fanatics

If, on the one hand, the antagonism which Luther was obliged to display towards the fanatical Anabaptists endangered his work, on the other the struggle was in many respects to his advantage.

His being obliged to withstand the claim constantly made by the fanatics to inspiration by the Holy Ghost served as a warning to him to exercise caution and moderation in appealing to a higher call in the case of his own enterprise; being compelled also to invoke the assistance of the authorities against the fanatics' subversion of the existing order of things, he was naturally obliged to be more reticent himself and to refrain from preaching revolution in the interests of his own teaching. We even find him at times desisting from his claim to special inspiration and guidance by the "spirit" in the negotiations entered into on account of the Münzer business; this, however, he does with a purpose and in opposition with his well-known and usual view. In place of his real ideas, as expressed by him both before and after this period, he, for a while, prefers to deprecate any use of force or violence, and counsels his sovereign to introduce the innovations gradually, pointing out the most suitable methods with patience and prudence.

At first he was anxious that indulgence should be observed even in dealing with the Anabaptists, but later on he invoked vigorously the aid of the authorities.

In reality he himself was borne along by principles akin to those of the fanatics whose ideas were, as a matter of fact, an outcome of his own undertaking. His own writings exhibit many a trait akin to their pseudo-mysticism. In the end his practical common sense was more than a match for these pestering opponents, who for a time gave him so much trouble. His learning and education raised him far above them and made the religious notions of the Anabaptists abhorrent to him, while his public position at the University, as well as his official and personal relations with the sovereign, ill-disposed him to the demagogism of the fanatics and their efforts to win over the common people to their side.

The fanatical aim of Thomas Münzer, the quondam Catholic priest who had worked as a preacher of the new

faith at Allstedt, near Eisleben, since 1523, was the extermination by violence of all impious persons, and the setting up of a Kingdom of God formed of all the righteous here on earth, after the ideal of apostolic times. This tenet, rather than rebaptism, was the mark of his followers. The rebaptism of adults, which was practised by the sect, was merely due to their belief that an active faith was essential for the reception of the sacraments, whilst children of tender years were incapable of any faith at all.

As a beginning of the war against the "idolatry" of the old Church, Münzer caused the Pilgrimage Chapel at Malderbach, near Eisleben, where a miraculous picture of Our Lady was venerated, to be destroyed in April, 1524. He then published a fiery sermon he had recently preached, in which he exhorted the great ones and all friends of the Evangel among the people at once to abolish Divine Worship as it had hitherto been practised. The sermon was sent to the Electoral Court by persons who were troubled about the rising, and who begged that Münzer might be called to account. The sermon was also forwarded to Luther by Spalatin, the Court Chaplain, evidently in order that Luther might take some steps to obviate the danger. In point of fact, Luther's eagle eye took in the situation at a glance, and he at once decided to intervene with the utmost vigour. With Münzer's spirit he was already acquainted through personal observation, so he said, and now he realised yet more clearly that its effect would be to let the mob loose, with the consequence that "heavenly spirits" of every sort would soon be claiming to interfere in the direction of his own enterprise.

Luther at once composed a clever and powerful writing entitled "A Circular to the Princes of Saxony Concerning the Spirit of Revolt." This appeared in the last days of July, 1524. To it we shall return later, for it is of great psychological interest.

Münzer was dismissed from his situation, and went to Mühlhausen, where the apostate monk, Heinrich Pfeifer, had already prepared the ground, and thence to Nuremberg. At Nuremberg he brought out, in September, 1524, his "Hochverursachte Schutzrede und Antwort wider das geistlose sanftlebende Fleisch zu Wittenberg" in reply to Luther's Circular, above mentioned. He then recommenced

his restless wanderings through South Germany and Switzerland. He remained for some time with the ex-priest and professor of theology, Balthasar Hubmaier, then pastor of the new faith at Waldshut. On his return to Mühlhausen, in December, he put into execution his fantastic communistic scheme, which lasted until he and the seditious peasants were defeated in the encounter at Frankenhausen on May 15, 1525; his execution for a while put an end to the endeavours of the fanatics. Nevertheless, in other places, more particularly at Münster during the famous Reign of Terror from 1532–1535, the fanaticism of the Anabaptists again broke out under even worse forms.

The short circular, "On the Spirit of Revolt,"[1] referred to above as a document curiously illustrative of Luther's psychology, is not important in the sense of furnishing a true picture of his inner thoughts and feelings. Conveying as it does a petition and admonition to the Princes, it is naturally worded politically and with great caution, and was also manifestly intended for the general public. Nevertheless its author, even where he clothes his thoughts in the strange and carefully chosen dress best calculated to serve the purpose he had in view, affords us an interesting glimpse into his mode of action. He also shows throughout the whole circular in what light he wishes to see his own higher mission regarded.

Luther commences his writing with a complaint regarding Satan. It is his habit, he says, when nothing else avails, "to attack the Word of God by means of false spirits and teachers." Hence, because he now perceives that the Evangel, though assailed by "raging Princes" (the opponents of the Saxon Princes), was nevertheless growing and thriving all the more, he had made a nest at Allstedt and caused his spirits there to proclaim that, "it was a bad thing that faith and charity and the Cross of Christ were being preached at Wittenberg. You must hear God's voice yourself, they say, and suffer God's action in you and feel how heavy your load is. It is all nonsense about the Scriptures [so Luther makes them say], all 'Bible, Bubble, Babble,'" etc.

Secondly, a charge which was likely to weigh as much or even more with the Princes, he proceeds, "the same spirit would not allow the matter to remain one of words, but intended to strike with

[1] Ed. E. L. Enders in "Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke," Halle, 1893, No. 118, p. 3 ff.; "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 210 ff. Erl. ed., 53, p. 256 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 372).

the fist, to oppose the authorities by force and to bring about an actual revolt." As against this he points out very skilfully, that, according to God's ordinance, the Princes are the "rulers of the world," and that Christ had said: "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36). Hence his urgent exhortation to them is "to prevent such disorders and to anticipate the revolt."

As to the spirit on which the fanatics pride themselves, it had not yet, so Luther declares, been proved, but "goes about working its own sweet will" without being willing to vindicate itself before two or three witnesses; Münzer, according to Luther's previous experience of him, had no wish to present himself at Wittenberg (to be examined); "he was afraid of the soup and preferred to stay among his own followers, who say yes to all his excellent speeches."

"If I, who am so deficient in the spirit and hear no heavenly voices," so he humbly assures the Princes, "had uttered such words against my Papists, how they would have cried out on me 'Gewunnen' and have stopped my mouth! I cannot glorify myself or defy others with such great words; I am a poor, wretched man and far from carrying through my enterprise in a high-handed way, I began it with great fear and trembling, as St. Paul, who surely might have boasted of the heavenly voice, confesses concerning himself (1 Cor. ii.)." [1]

Luther now comes to the proof that, unlike the fanatics, his cause was from God, that it was very different from Münzer's enterprise, that he was being unfairly attacked by this rival, and that consequently his sovereign should support his undertaking as he had previously done. Here he undoubtedly meets with greater difficulties than when he made the off-hand statement that Münzer's spirit was a "lying devil, and an evil devil," and that "storming and fanaticism" and acts of violence by the rabble "Mr. Omnes" must not be permitted.

From the burden of proof for his own mission from above, consisting in many instances of mere hints and allusions, we may select the following considerations submitted by him to his sovereign.

First: I proceed "without boasting and defiance," with humility, indeed with "fear." "How humbly, to begin with, did I attack the Pope, how I implored and besought, as my first writings testify!"—We have seen that Luther's writings and the steps he took from the outset of the struggle "testify," as a matter of fact, to something quite different. Here he says never a word of the communications he believed he had received from the Spirit of God and his experience of being carried away by

[1] "Neudrucke," p. 7; "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 214.

God. We may also add that his appeal to the example of Paul in the passage of Corinthians referred to above, when speaking of the "trembling and fear" he endured, was scarcely in place, since it was no question of actual fear in the case of the Apostle, as Paul, shortly afterwards, in the sublime consciousness of his Divine mission goes on to say: we are God's coadjutors . . . according to the grace of God which is given to me as a wise architect I have laid the foundation (1 Cor. iii. 9, 10). Paul merely states, that he is unable to speak to the Corinthians as to spiritual men, because they were still "babes in Christ," not as though anything were wanting in him, for the testimony "of the Spirit and of power" never failed him.

A second point upon which Luther lays great stress is, that, though I was of so humble and "poor a spirit" I nevertheless performed "noble and exalted spiritual works," which Münzer certainly has not done. I stood up for the Evangel, which I preached in an "honourable and manly" fashion; indeed "my very life was in danger": "I have had to risk life and limb for it and I cannot but glory in it," he says, again with reference to Paul, "as St. Paul also was obliged to do; though it is foolishness and I should prefer to leave it to the lying spirits."[1] What exactly are the instances that he is so unwilling to relate of his noble scorn for death? "I stood up at Leipzig to dispute before a most dangerous assembly. I went to Augsburg without escort to appear before my greatest enemy. And I took my stand at Worms before the Emperor and the whole realm, knowing well beforehand that the pledge of a safe conduct would be broken, and that savage malice and cunning were directed against me. But, poor and weak as I then was, my will was nevertheless so determined that, had I known there were as many devils waiting for me as there were tiles on the roofs of Worms, I should still have ridden thither, and yet I had as yet heard nothing of heavenly voices and 'God's burdens and works'" (such as the fanatics pretended they had experienced). He commits his cause to Christ the Lord, so he declares, if He will support him then all will be well, but "before men and any assembly he is ready to answer boldly for himself" (as he had done at Leipzig, Augsburg and Worms).

Münzer, in his "Schutzrede," was not slow to answer Luther's "boasting" concerning his three appearances in public. It must be touched upon here for the sake of completeness, although it must be borne in mind that it is the utterance of an opponent. Münzer calls Luther repeatedly, and not merely on account of this boasting, "Dr. Liar" and "Lying Luther." He says to him: "Why do you throw dust in the eyes of the people? you were very well off indeed at Leipzig. You rode out of the city crowned with gilly-flowers and drank good wine at Melchior Lother's? Nor were you in any danger at Augsburg [as a matter of fact every precaution had been taken], for Staupitz the oracle stood at your side. . . . That you appeared before the

[1] "Neudrucke," p. 9=215.

Empire at Worms at all was thanks to the German nobles whom you had cajoled and honeyed, for they fully expected, that, by your preaching you would obtain for them Bohemian gifts of monasteries and foundations which you are now promising to the Princes. Therefore if you had wavered at Worms, you would have been stabbed by the nobles sooner than allowed to go free, as everyone knows. . . . You made use of wiles and cunning towards your own followers. You allowed yourself to be taken captive by your own councillors [and brought to the Wartburg] and made out that you were ill-used. Anyone ignorant of your knavery would no doubt swear by all the Saints that you were a pious Martin. Sleep softly, dear lump of flesh. I should prefer to sniff you roasting in your defiance under the anger of God."[1] The falsity of Luther's assertion, that the promise of a safe conduct had not been kept at Worms, has been already pointed out (p. 69). The reason of his appearing at Augsburg without an escort for the journey there and back, was, that the Elector trusted Cardinal Cajetan and did not wish Luther to apply for one.

In proof of his being in the right Luther, in the third place, points emphatically to his learning and his success. His cause was thus based on a much firmer foundation than that of the Allstedt fanatic. "I know and am certain that by the Grace of God I am more learned in the Scripture than all the sophists and Papists, but God has thus far graciously preserved me from pride, and will continue to preserve me." "I have done more harm to the Pope without the use of fists than a powerful king could have done"; "my words have emptied many a convent." These fanatics "utilise our victory and enjoy it, take wives and relax papal laws, though it was not they who bore the brunt of the fighting."

Fourthly: "I know that we who possess and understand the Gospel—though we be but poor sinners—have the right spirit, or as Paul says [Rom. viii. 23] '*primitias spiritus*,' the first-fruits of the spirit, though we may not have the fulness of the spirit. . . . We know what faith, charity and the cross are. . . . Hence we know and can judge whether a doctrine is true or false, just as we are able to discern and judge this lying spirit," etc.

Fifthly we must consider the fruits of our teaching. These are those mentioned by St. Paul (Gal. v. 22 f., Rom. viii. 13), viz: "charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity and mildness"; Paul also says, "that the deeds of the flesh must be mortified and the old Adam, together with all his works, crucified with Christ. In a word, the fruit of our spirit is the keeping of the ten commandments of God." The Allstedt spirit, he adds, ought really to bring forth yet higher fruits since it purports to be a higher spirit. If fruits are lacking then surely we also may admit that, "alas, we do not as much as we

[1] In "Neudrucke," this work also is edited by Enders (p. 19 ff.). The passage will be found on p. 37 f.

ought."—It is notorious enough that Luther might have made still greater admissions of this sort. Nevertheless, he is able to point to "abundant fruit of the spirit produced by God's Grace among our followers," and is ready, "if it comes to boasting," to set his own person, "which is the meanest and most sinful of all, against all the fruits of the Allstedt spirit, however greatly the fanatics may blame my life." In order, however, the better to safeguard himself on this point, he remarks that, "on account of the life, the doctrine" must not be condemned, as this spirit "takes offence at our feeble life." It appears that Münzer had spoken very strongly against Luther and the goings on at Wittenberg.

The one sentence in Luther's writing which must have made the deepest impression on his princely readers, and on their courtiers, was that concerning the appropriation of the churches and convents, which had been surrendered in consequence of the innovations. "Let the Rulers of the land do what they please with them!" This invitation, in the mind of those in power, was quite sufficient to make up for the deficiencies of the other arguments and to be considered as an irrefragable proof of the justice of the cause.

Luther's higher mission being in his own opinion so firmly established that he had no cause to fear any man, he goes so far in his Circular as to propose that his Anabaptist foes should not be hindered. "Do not scruple to let them preach freely!" He for his part will gird himself for the fight, and we know of how much the force and violence of his eloquence was capable. Confident that no one could stand against his written or spoken word, he cries: "Let the spirits fall upon one another and fight it out. . . . Where there is a struggle and a battle some must fall and be wounded, but whoever fights manfully receives the crown." As a matter of fact, however, he was speedily to withdraw this too-confident challenge; indeed, as we shall see, he later went so far as to demand the infliction of the death-penalty upon those who dared to differ in doctrine from himself, viz. the Anabaptists and fanatics, establishing the necessity of this on passages from the Old Testament which speak of the execution of false prophets.[1]

[1] In vol. vi., xxxviii. 1, it will be shown that the ground of his demand for the execution of the Anabaptists was not merely the revolutionary character of the sect, but also the crime of religion involved in their error.

Münzer's party too had appealed in defence of their violent work of destruction to the precepts of the Old Testament (Gen. xi. 2 ; Deut. vii. 12 ; xii. 2, 3 : " Destroy the altars and break down the images," etc.). Hence Luther deemed it necessary to point out in his Circular against them, that " a certain Divine command then existed for such acts of destruction which is not given to us at the present day."

It was no uncommon thing for the Bible to furnish such matters of dispute for the warring elements ; in the question of the Divine commission it ever occupied the foreground.

Luther solemnly raised the Bible on high and, to the Anabaptists and other teachers of the new faith who differed from him, protested that he and he alone had discovered the Word of God and was the appointed teacher. Yet all those whom he addressed said the selfsame thing and even maintained that they could show better proofs of their mission than Luther. How, then, was the question to be decided ?

The Catholic Church has never permitted individual doctors to set up their own as the authentic interpretation of the Bible ; she declared herself to be the only divinely appointed supreme authority qualified to determine the true sense of the written Word of God, she herself having received the living Word of God, together with authorisation to guard the whole body of Divine teaching, the written inclusive, in its primitive purity, and to proclaim it with an infallible voice. She appeals to the words of Christ : " Teach all nations," " He that hears you, hears me," " You shall be witnesses for me to the ends of the earth," " I am with you, even to the consummation of the world."[1]

Outside this safe rule there is nothing but arbitrary judgment and confusion. Luther and those he called " heretics " accused each other of the most flagrant arbitrariness, and not without cause. They applied to each other in derision the phrase : " Bible, Bubble, Babble," for indeed it was a confusion of tongues. It was not merely Luther who applied the phrase to Münzer's party, for, according to Agricola, Münzer mocked the Lutherans with the same words when they ventured to attack him with biblical texts. The Anabaptist Conrad Grebel, of Zürich, writing to Münzer on

[1] Matthew xxviii. 19, Luke x. 16, Acts i. 8, Matthew xxviii. 20.

September 5, 1524, says: "You have on your side the Bible, which Luther derides as 'Bible, Bubble, Babble, etc.'"[1]

No one could prevent the fanatics from availing themselves of the freedom of private interpretation which Luther had set up as a principle. Münzer, no less than Luther, respected the Bible as such, and knew how to make use of it skilfully. He also, declared, exactly as Luther had done, that he taught the people "only according to Holy Scripture," and, "please God, never preached his own conceits."[2] According to Luther's own principles, Münzer's faction had also a perfect right to make the "outward Word" (the Bible) agree with the "inward Word," which they believed they heard. When Luther, at a later date, insists so strongly on the need of accepting the outward Word as well as the inner worth, this was really a retreat on his part (see vol. iv., xxviii. 1); moreover, by the outward Word he here means the Bible as he explained it.

To force those who were unwilling to accept the new, purely personal and subjective interpretation, and to do so without the authority of the Church, whose claims had been definitively discarded, was to exercise an intolerable spiritual despotism. We can well understand how Münzer came to complain, in one of his letters, that Luther in his Circular-Letter "ramps in as ferociously and hideously as a mighty tyrant."[3] He could well complain in particular of Luther's demand, that the spirit which spoke in Münzer should submit to an examination before the Lutheran tribunal at Wittenberg previous to being acknowledged as a spirit which had been duly called. This Luther required, assuring his followers that Münzer's party was execrated even by the Papists, that it had no real commission and could show no miracles on its behalf. He was anxious to retain for himself the "first-fruits of the Spirit." To this the retort of his foes was that the first-fruits of the Spirit were theirs, belonging to them by virtue of heavenly testimony. This fellow Luther wishes to ascribe the first-fruits of the Spirit to himself, wrote Grebel to Münzer, and yet he com-

[1] Passages quoted by Enders, "Briefwechsel Luthers," 4, p. 373, n. 3. [2] "Neudrucke," p. 35.

[3] Letter of August 3, 1524, to the Elector of Saxony, in Förstemann's "Neues Urkundenbuch zur Gesch. der Reformation," p. 248. Enders, "Neudrucke," p. v.

poses such a "wicked booklet." I know his intentions; they are thoroughly tyrannical. "I see he means to give you up to the headsman's axe and hand you over to the Princes."[1]

And yet, in spite of other differences between himself and the Anabaptists, Luther found himself in agreement with them not merely on the principle of free interpretation of the Bible but also in the stress he lays on the inspiration from above supposed to be bestowed on all. Luther did not deny that individual inspiration, the "whisper" from on high, as he termed it, was one of the means by which faith might be arrived at; on the contrary, the only question for him was how far this might go.

Luther was fond of insisting that only a heart tried by temptation was able to arrive at the understanding of the words of Scripture and of religious truths in general. Münzer, too, demands this preliminary on the part of the would-be theologian, though he does so in rather more fantastic language. Study of Tauler's mysticism had filled his mind, even more than Luther's, with confused notions. On the appearance of Luther's Circular-Letter, he offered to submit to an examination of his spirit before the whole of Christendom. Those were to be summoned from all nations who had "endured overwhelming temptations in matters of faith and had arrived at despair of heart." These words we find in a letter addressed to the Elector of Saxony, August 3, 1524.[2] Luther, however, considered himself far better acquainted with the abyss of interior sufferings than any other; Münzer must not be allowed to interfere with him here. "We must not be bold in the Word of God," but "treat Holy Scripture with reverence and great fear; this the rabble and the impudent spirits do not do." Such things (what Christ says concerning the new birth) "cannot be understood, unless a man has experienced it, and himself undergone a spiritual regeneration."[3]

Luther, in point of fact, met the Anabaptists half-way on that doctrine of baptism from which they took their name. Rebaptism he naturally rejected, but he nevertheless advocated the principle for which the Anabaptists stood,

[1] In Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 4, p. 375, n. 8.
[2] Enders, "Neudrucke," p. v.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 46, p. 265 f.

namely, that, for the reception of baptism, faith is necessary on the part of the catechumen. To overcome the difficulties which presented themselves in the case of children who had not yet reached the use of reason, he had recourse to some curious explanations. There was no help for it; they also must believe. Probably they are enlightened at the moment of baptism, which, in accordance with the Church's ancient usage, must be administered to them, and, by some Almighty action, are penetrated with that perception of faith which is essential for the reception of this absolutely necessary sacrament, After all, he argues, why should reason be essential for faith? Is not reason really hostile to faith? Strange indeed were the subterfuges in which he took refuge in order to evade the consequences which Münzer and his party rightly drew from his theses.[1]

But in spite of all they might have in common, and notwithstanding his being the actual father of the detestable Anabaptist error, he felt himself removed far above the fanatics by a sense of superiority and Divine support which no words could adequately express.

His conviction regarding his own supreme mission and his great gifts and achievements, which increased in strength as he advanced in years, derived further encouragement from the utter madness of the fanatics and his success in overthrowing them.

No sooner had the unhappy Münzer been made prisoner and, after a contrite Catholic confession, been beheaded at Mühlhausen, together with Heinrich Pfeifer, a priest, and twenty-four rebels, than Luther proclaimed the event throughout Germany in a pamphlet as a plain judgment of God, which set a seal on his own Evangel and confirmed him as the teacher of the truth.

In this work, entitled "A frightful story and Divine Judg-

[1] The proofs for this wonderful enlightenment of children will be quoted below in another connection. To the opposition between faith and reason, Luther appeals in the question of infant baptism, in "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 53, where he says (in the "Table Talk") that "reason is of no avail in the matter of faith. And for this very reason children should be baptised when they are without reason. . . . Because reason is the greatest hindrance to faith." *Ibid.*, he proves from the fact that the Christian Church still existed in early ages that infant baptism is lawful, for it would have ceased to exist had infant baptism, which was universally upheld by tradition, been invalid.

ment,"[1] he says: Had God spoken through him "this [his fall] would not have occurred. For God does not lie but keeps His Word. Since then Thomas Münzer has fallen, it is plain that he spoke and acted through the devil while pretending to do so in the name of God. . . . More than five thousand," he continues, "rushed headlong to destruction of body and soul. Alas! the pity of it all! This was what the devil wanted, and what he is seeking in the case of the seditious peasants." He protests that, "he feels sorry that the people should thus have perished in body and soul," but he cannot help endorsing their eternal reprobation, as far as in him lies; "to the end they remained hardened in infidelity, perjury and blasphemy,"[2] therefore if God has so manifestly punished these "noxious, false prophets," this must serve to teach us to have a great regard for the "true Word of God."

"I do not boast of an exalted spirit," Luther says, comparing himself with the fanatics and their like, but "I do glory in the great gifts and graces of my God and of His Spirit, and I do so rightly, so I think, and not without cause. . . . Münzer is indeed dead, but his spirit is not yet exterminated. . . . The devil is not asleep, but continues to send out sparks. . . . These preachers cannot control themselves, the spirit has blinded them and taken them captive, therefore they are not to be trusted. . . . Beware and take heed, for Satan has come among the children of God!"[3]

His self-confidence makes it as clear as daylight to him that he is the true interpreter of the Word of God, whether against the survivors of Münzer's party or against the fickle phantasies of Carlstadt; this we see particularly in the caustic, eloquent tracts he launched against the latter: "To the Christians of Strasburg against the fanatics" and "Against the heavenly Prophets."

In the latter, a famous book which will be dealt with later when we have to speak of Carlstadt (vol. iii., xix. 2), Luther attacks the fanatics along the whole line and unconditionally lays claim to a higher authority for his own personal illumination and his Evangel. Yet he does not omit to point out, in view of the fact that so many repudiated this Evangel, that its power can only be felt by those whose consciences have been "humbled and perturbed."

Never for a moment does he relinquish his claim, that his interpretation of the Bible is the only true one:—

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 367 ff.; Erl. ed., 65, p. 12 ff. See above, p. 206 f., where some quotations from this writing have already been given. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 373=20.

[3] *Ibid.*, 23, p. 280–3=30, p. 150.

"What else was wanting in Münzer," he says, "than that he did not rightly expound the Word? . . . He should have taught the pure Gospel! . . . It is a great art to be able to distinguish rightly between the Law and the Gospel. . . . God's Word is not all of the same sort, but is diverse. . . . Whoever is able to distinguish rightly between the Law and the Gospel is given a high place and called a Doctor of Holy Scripture, for without the Holy Ghost it is impossible to make this distinction. This I have experienced myself. . . . No Pope, or false Christian, or fanatic, is able to separate these two [the Law and the Gospel] one from the other."[1] But because he had the "Holy Spirit," Luther was able to make this supremely great discovery, and found thereby the key to the Scriptures, on which alone he builds.

"I, for my part, have, by the grace of God, now effected so much that, thanks be to God, boys and girls of fifteen know more of Christian doctrine than all the Universities and Doctors previously did." "I have set men's consciences at rest concerning penance, baptism, prayer, crosses, life, death and the Sacrament of the Altar, and also ordered the question of marriage, of secular authority, of the relations of father and mother, wife and child, father and son, man and maid—in short, every condition of life, so that all know how to live and how to serve God according to one's state."[2]

Given his achievements, Luther was not going too far when he spoke of himself repeatedly as a "great doctor."[3] He also showed himself extremely sensitive, as we shall soon see, to the attempts of the sectarians and fanatics to deprive him of the honour of the first place, to discredit his discovery of the Gospel, and either to crown themselves with his laurels and possess themselves of the fruits of his struggles, or, at his expense, to invent novelties and launch them on the world. Seeing that Christ is "destroying the Papacy" through him and is bringing it to its "*exspiravit*," i.e. to the last gasp, he is naturally annoyed to learn that there are other spokesmen of the new faith who refuse to follow him without question, and who cause "a great falling away from his preaching and much slanderous talk. There are some, who after having read a page or two or listened to a sermon, without further ado take it on themselves to be overbearing and to reproach others, telling them that their conduct is not that of the followers of the Gospel." This, he declares, he himself had "never taught anyone," rather, as St. Paul also had done, he had "strictly forbidden it. They merely act in this way because they are desirous of novelties. . . . They misapply Holy Scripture to their own conceits."[4]

All this he says when actually declaring that he has no wish to set himself above anyone, or to be "any man's master."

There was scarcely one among the many teachers of the innovations who dared to differ from him whom Luther did not

[1] Erl. ed., 19^1, p. 237. [2] *Ibid.*, 63, p. 272. In 1528.
[3] See vol. iv., xxv. 4.
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 684; Erl. ed., 22, p. 55.

liken to the devil. "I have had more than thirty doctors of the fanatics opposing me," he said on one occasion, "all anxious to be my instructors"; all these he had driven before him like chaff and vanquished the "devil" in them.[1]

"Münzer, Carlstadt, Campanus and such fellows, together with the factious spirits and sects, are merely devils incarnate, for all their efforts are directed to doing harm and avenging themselves."[2]

Himself he looks upon as the champion of God against the devil, raised, as it were, to the pinnacle of the temple. It is the devil whom by heavenly power he repels and shames in the fanatics who arise in his camp. "Satan," he says to them, "cannot conceal himself."[3] "Such fellows are beguiled by the devil."[4] Johann Agricola, a comrade of his, he delivers over to Satan, because he differed from him in some points of doctrine: "He goes on his way, all devoted to Satan as he is, sowing seeds of enmity against us."[5] Luther warns him that he may become a martyr, but like Arius and Satan, whom Christ punishes. "Good God, what utter malice! These heretics say of me what the Manichæans said of Christ, viz. that Christ had indeed the Holy Spirit but only in an imperfect degree, whereas they themselves possessed it in its perfection."[6]

Caspar Schwenckfeld, like Agricola, he esteemed an heretical theologian desirous of innovations, "a mad fool possessed by the devil"; "it is the devil who spews and excretes his works." Luther's malediction on this heretical devil runs, "May God's curse light on thee, Satan, thy spirit which called thee forth, be with thee to thy destruction."[7] Michael Stiefel, the Lutheran preacher and fanatic, is also no less possessed of the devil. "It is soon over with a man," Luther laments over this old friend, "when the devil possesses him in this way."[8] Even Zwingli and the Zwinglians are also possessed through and through by the devil and are the servants of Satan.[9] All who do not agree with him, but set up their own ideas, merely show that the devil is at work in the world. "This is how the work of the devil goes on. In twenty years I have met more than fifty sectarians desirous of teaching me, but God has preserved me, He Who said of St. Paul, 'I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake'" (Acts ix. 16).[10]

It is these men whom the devil [of pride] carries high up "in the air and sets on the pinnacle of the temple."[11]

We must cut short this string of Luther's utterances and quote some of the words of his opponents. What Thomas

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., p. 684; Erl. ed., 61, p. 91.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 1. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[5] To Justus Menius, January 10, 1542, Letters, ed. De Wette, 5, p. 426. [6] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 323.
[7] To Schwenckfeld's messengers, 1543, De Wette, 5, p. 614.
[8] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 295.
[9] See vol. iii., xix. 1. [10] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 323.
[11] "Werke," Erl. ed., 19^2, p. 372.

Münzer said in reply is the reverse of feeble, but at least it gives us a good idea of the way in which controversies were conducted in those days. Thomas Münzer, in his printed reply to Luther referred to above,[1] is manifestly angry that Luther should stamp all who contradict him as devils.

"That most ambitious, lying scribe Dr. Luther," he says, becomes, "the longer he lives, more of an arrogant fool, shields himself behind Holy Scripture and utilises it to his advantage in the most deceitful manner."[2]

The greatest of all crimes is that "no attention is paid to the commands of the Pope of Wittenberg," Münzer remarks sarcastically; Luther was putting himself up "in place of the Pope," while at the same time "he curried favour with the Princes"; "you, you new Pope, make them presents of convents and churches." "You have distracted all Christendom with a false religion and now, when it is necessary, are unable to control it" except with the help of the rulers. He was introducing "a new system of logic-chopping with the Word of God"; he is desirous of "managing everything by the Word" and exalts himself as though he had not come into the world in the ordinary way but had "sprung from the brain." He speaks of "our safeguard and protection" as though he himself were a Prince; with his "fantastic reason" he was working mischief, while making a great display of humility; he makes much of his own "simplicity," but this resembled that of the fox, or of an onion which has nine skins. All his adversaries he labelled as "devils," but he himself raved and ranted like a hound of hell, and if he did not raise an open revolt this was merely because, like the serpent, he glided over the rocks.[3]

Equally remarkable are the words addressed to Luther by Valentine Ickelsamer, one of the leaders of the fanatics. He tells Luther that his preaching only goes half-way, for it proclaims the right of private judgment in things Divine, but not for all men, and "confuses the people" by its want of logic and instability. Ickelsamer himself is determined to speak, "because the Evangel gives us freedom of belief and the power of judging." Not only does he find numerous "Scriptural utterances which are against Luther's views," but he also inveighs strongly against the gigantic pride which leads Luther to "desire that everyone should look to him"; his self-exaltation leads him to commit the gravest "injustice and tyranny." "Settle yourself comfortably in the Papal Chair" he cries to Luther, "for after all you only want to listen to your own singing." Your obstinacy is such, he says, that you would have no scruple in contradicting the statement "Christ is God" "were you unfavourably disposed"

[1] P. 364, cp. 130.

[2] Enders' ed. in "Neudrucke" (see above, p. 126, n. 5), No. 118, p. 19.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 29–39.

towards its author. Would it not be a good thing if "Our Lord God were to smash the idols and set you up in their place?"[1]

In spite of all remonstrances Luther continued, nevertheless, to compare his adversaries to mere devils. The devil beguiles them to employ their reason, to seek the reason ("*Quare*") of the articles of faith. Such words are tantamount to an attack on theology in general. "The '*Quare*,'" he says, "leads us into all the unhappiness and heresy by which our first parents were deceived by the devil in Paradise. . . . Verily we deserve to be crowned with coltsfoot for being so foolish and falling so readily into the snare when the devil comes along with his old '*Quare*.'"[2]

"They are lost [the fanatics], they are the devil's own."[3]

On the other hand, Luther makes the devil confirm his own mission. "The devil has been dreading this for years and smelt the roast from afar; he also sent forth many prophecies against it, some of which apply to me so that I often marvel at his great malice. He would also have liked to kill me."[4] The devil desired Luther's death simply in order to rid himself of his fine preaching.

Another familiar thought which seemed to have an irresistible attraction for him frequently intervenes to confirm this theory. My interior sufferings, he says repeatedly, and my struggles with the devil, set the seal of most certain assurance on my teaching, and this seal the fanatics do not possess.

Here comes Campanus, he says of a refractory theologian in his ranks, and "makes himself out to be the only man who is sure of everything"; "he prides himself on being certain upon all matters and of never being at a loss"; Campanus condemns him as a "liar and diabolical man," and of this he was "as sure as that God is God." And yet this Campanus has "never passed through any struggle, nor had a tussle with the devil, and actually glories in the fact."[5] On the other hand, he himself, he says, had been "tried by the devil" and proved by "temptation"; that is the true test and is essential for every real "student of theology"; "for as soon as God's Word dawns upon you, the devil is sure to try you, and in this way you become a doctor in very truth."[6]

"But those whom the devil takes captive by false doctrine and a factious spirit, he holds tight. He takes possession of their heart, making them deaf and blind, so that they neither see nor hear anything, and do not pay any heed to the plain, clear and

[1] "Clag etlicher Brüder," etc., in Enders' "Neudrucke," pp. 44, 54.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 38, p. 177.
[3] *Ibid.*, 53, p. 276 f.
[4] Weim. ed., 8, p. 683; Erl. ed., 22, p. 52 f.
[5] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 61, p. 5. [6] *Ibid.*, 63, p. 405.

manifest testimony of Holy Scripture; for they are so tightly caught in his clutches that they cannot be torn away."[1] At first heretics do not see where Satan is taking them. "They put forward the antecedent most devoutly and with a simulated peace of conscience. Thereupon the devil draws a consequence, which they [the factious spirits] had never dreamt of. Johann Agricola, for instance, does not see the consequence. But the devil is a capital dialectician and has already built up the syllogism, antecedent, consequence and all. And yet we still lull ourselves into a false security and think that the devil is not governing the world."[2] Luther refers the prejudice of heretics in favour of their errors to a kind of bewitchment by the devil, for if the devil is able to bewitch the bodily senses, as Luther was convinced he could, then he will also be able, "expert and dangerous adept" as he is, to take captive the hearts and consciences of men "with still greater ease." "What is nothing but a lie, heresy and horrid darkness, they take for plain, pure truth and are not to be moved from their ideas by any exhortations or remonstrance. . . . They behave like those parents in the legend of St. Macarius, who, owing to a delusion of the devil, took their daughter for a cow, until they were at last set free from the spell. . . . Thus the devil in such people effects by false doctrine what he is otherwise wont to bring about by means of delusive pictures and fancies."[3]

We will here conclude with a family scene. On one occasion, in 1544, Luther, in the presence of Catherine von Bora, poured out his ire against Schwenckfeld for his want of acquiescence in his doctrines: "He is '*attonitus*' [moonstruck], like all the fanatics," he says of him. "He spurts the grand name of Christ over the people and wants me to bow low before him. I thank God I am better off, however, for I know my Christ well, and have no need of this man's filth." Here Catherine interrupted him: "But, my dear Sir, that is really too rude." Luther replied: "They are my masters in rudeness. It is necessary to speak so to the devil; he can make an end of this fanaticism," etc. . . . "He leads the Churches astray, though from God he has received neither command nor mission! The mad, devil-possessed fool does not even know what he is talking about. . . . Of the muck the devil spews and excretes through his booklet I have had quite enough."[4]

[1] Erl. ed., 39, p. 109.
[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 321.
[3] "Comm. in. Epist. ad Gal." (ed. Irmischer), 1, p. 279.
[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 335.

7. Progress of the Apostasy. Diets of Spires (1529) and Augsburg (1530)

The Imperial Edict, issued after the Diet of Nuremberg and dated February 8, 1523, had decreed, that the Gospel should be preached agreeably to the teaching of the Christian Church.

At the Diet of Nuremberg, in 1524, it had been enacted that the edict against Luther promulgated at Worms was to stand and to be enforced as far as was possible ; the Pope was also to be requested to summon a General Council to meet in Germany, but, before this, it was to be decided at a religious convention, meeting at Spires in the same year, what attitude should be assumed towards the doctrines called into question. Against this decree Luther published an angry, turbulent pamphlet entitled, " Two unequal and contradictory commands."[1] He therein showed that the orders of the Diet were self-contradictory ; for it was absurd to uphold the Edict of Worms in all its severity and yet at the same time to reserve the decision regarding Luther's doctrine to the assembly at Spires.[2]

He went, however, much further and attacked the authority of the Estates and of the Emperor. On the other hand, at the conclusion of the Diet, the Dukes William and Lewis of Bavaria, and twelve bishops of South Germany, at the instance of Lorenzo Campeggio, the Papal Legate, and Archduke Ferdinand, had met together and agreed to carry out the Edict of Worms as far as they were able, and at the same time to inaugurate a wholesome reform of morals amongst both clergy and people. " By means of this agreement the temporal and spiritual Princes hoped to maintain unimpaired the religious unity of the German Nation and to insure internal tranquillity in their dominions."[3] Dissension for a while prevented others from joining the league.

The indecision of the Diets was due not only to lack of unity among the Catholics, but to a variety of other causes : to political considerations, the state of general unrest, the need of adopting measures against the Turks, the apprehensions of the Estates, and, finally, to religious indifference.

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 220 ff.

[2] Cp. Janssen, " Hist. of the German People " (Engl. trans.), 4, p. 40.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 44 f.

The Diet of Spires, in 1526, decreed in language no less ambiguous, that the Edict of Worms was to remain in force until a General Council could be summoned, and that the sovereigns and Estates of the Empire should "live, govern and conduct themselves as they hoped to answer for it to God and His Majesty [the Emperor]." This cannot be read "as implying that the evangelicals were given a formal right to separate themselves from the communion with the Church and to set about the work of reformation on their own account."[1]

The Diet held subsequently at Spires, in 1529, opposed the anti-Catholic interpretation placed on the resolutions of 1526 and the way in which they had been enforced. It pointed out the inconveniences which had been their result, and sought earnestly to improve the position of affairs.[2] The article of 1526, it declared, had been interpreted, during the time that had since elapsed, in a most regrettable manner, "as an excuse for all sorts of shocking new doctrines and sects" and had served as a cloak for "apostasy, strife, dissension and wickedness"; wherefore it was to be rescinded and certain other enactments put into force.

Then follow the resolutions of the Diet of Spires, accepted by the Catholic majority and published with the Imperial sanction, against which the Lutheran Princes and Estates raised the "Protest" from which Protestantism took its name.

Foremost among these resolutions is the following: Those who had previously adhered to the Edict of Worms, "are determined to abide by the same until the future Council shall be convened and to insist upon their subjects doing so too." Further, it was enacted by the Estates, that, "where the new teaching had been introduced and could not be abolished without notable revolt, trouble and danger," "novelties" were to be avoided until the assembly of the Council. Thirdly, in places where the new teaching was in force the Blessed Sacrament in particular was not to be assailed or preached against (as it was by the Zwinglians),

[1] W. Friedensburg, "Der Reichstag zu Speyer, 1526," Berlin, 1887, p. 482, and in the "Archiv für Reformationsgesch.," 7, 1910, p. 93 ff. Th. Brieger ("Der Speierer Reichstag und die religiöse Frage," Leipzig, 1909) disagrees.

[2] The text of the Edict of 1529 taken from the Frankfurt Reichstagsakten, 43. Fol. 61′ ff. Janssen, *ibid.*, 5, 209 ff.; also in Luther's Works, ed. Walch, 16, p. 328 ff.

neither were people to be hindered from attending Mass. After more stringent measures had been sanctioned against the Anabaptists and "those who attempted to stir up the people to revolt against the authorities," for the preservation of peace in matters of religion it was further determined that, "no ruler might take the subjects of another ruler under his protection whether for reasons of belief or for any other." What had been enacted at Worms was to remain in full force, but "if any Estate should commit a deed of violence" the Kammergericht was empowered to pronounce sentence of outlawry on the offenders.

The latter enactments were occasioned by the preparations made by the Lutheran Estates to unite themselves still more closely in a common League.

Against these resolutions as a whole the party in the Reichstag which sided with the promoters of the innovations raised, on April 19, 1529, the "Protest" which has since become famous; they declared at the same time that it was impossible for them to countenance any alteration in the favourable Edict of 1526. Previous to the departure of their rulers and representatives, the Saxon Electorate, and Hesse, and the cities of Strasburg, Ulm and Nuremberg entered, on April 22, into the "particular secret agreement" concerning mutual armed resistance to any attack which might be made upon them in the "cause of the Word of God" by the Swabian League, the Kammergericht or the Empire.

In a Memorandum of the same year, also signed by Melanchthon, Luther approved the action of his Elector and sought to justify it from the theological point of view; "first, and principally, on the ground, that His Princely Highness [by accepting the Edict of Spires of 1529] would have been acting contrary to His Highness' conscience and condemning the doctrines which he acknowledged before God to be both Christian and wholesome." He also seeks to pacify the Prince by instancing the terrible abuses of the Papal Church in Germany, which had been so happily removed by the new teaching and which he ought not to use his authority to "re-establish or maintain."[1]

In the Reichstagsabschied there was, however, no question of the maintenance of abuses, and, only to Luther, could the retention of the Mass appear as the maintenance of an

[1] December, 1529, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 63 ("Briefwechsel," 7 p. 209).

"abuse"; it was much more a question of checking, for a time, the advance of the innovations and the propaganda of the Lutherans and of securing the legal rights of Catholics, more particularly in those districts where the new religious system was already in being.

The protesters might have accepted such a settlement without in any way sacrificing their claims to equity, had they really been desirous of justice and of coming to an agreement. Melanchthon himself, in his own name and that of his friends, could well write: "The Articles in the Imperial resolution do not press hard upon us."[1] Luther's opinion, on the other hand, was quite different; it was only his defiant attitude and their own obstinate determination to resist the terms offered them which prevented the protesters from accepting the resolution in question. Their action, however, tended to excite men's minds still further. They appealed to their conscience: "What would our assent be," they declared in the Protest, "but a public denial of our Lord and Saviour Christ and His sacred Word, which there is no doubt we now possess in all its purity, simplicity and justice?"

They then made the attitude they had thus assumed an excuse for refusing assistance against the Turks, notwithstanding the fact that news had already reached Spires that the Turkish fleet was cruising off the coasts of Sicily and threatening Western Christendom. "It is an undeniable fact, that they would not promise to render aid against the Turks unless the Catholic Estates of the Empire arrived at some other conclusion concerning the religious question than that under discussion, which they declared it was impossible for them to accept."[2]

Such was the position of affairs when, in the summer of 1530, the much-talked-of Reichstag at Augsburg was entrusted with the task of bringing about the practical

[1] "Corp. Reform.," 1, p. 1059, "*Articuli ibi facti non gravant nos, imo plus tuentur nos quam superioris conventus* (1526) *decretum.*"

[2] Wilh. Walther, "Für Luther," 1906, p. 330 f. The author characterises the resolution against which the protest was raised as a "horrible demand," even when the Edict simply enacts, "that no one be prohibited, hindered, or prevented from hearing Mass in those places where the other [Lutheran] teaching had sprung up." He sees in the Edict an outrage on conscience, a "deadly blow," and the forcing of the Lutheran Princes and Estates to "comply with the frightful Edict of Worms."

reconciliation of those who had separated from communion with the Church. In the event of failure the Emperor held out the prospect of the employment of sterner measures.

Luther and his followers agreed to the negotiations, but with the so-called "proviso of the Gospel," i.e. stipulating that the plain Gospel, the Word of God, should not be tampered with.

What a grand temple of peace the old Augsburg Rathaus, with its assembly-room for the forty-two members of the Reichstag, might have become! In that case what significance the solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament, which, accompanied by the Catholic Princes and Estates, passed through the streets of the city on the Feast of Corpus Christi, would have possessed. Intentionally the feast had been celebrated with a pomp and concourse of people such as had never before been witnessed in the city, for was it not to symbolise the establishment of religious unity? As it was, however, the work of pacification completely miscarried, owing to the stubbornness of Luther and his party.

Luther himself remained in the background during the proceedings. He stayed in a place of safety at the Castle of Coburg, situated on the Elector's territory but sufficiently near to the city where the Reichstag was held. His principal representative at Augsburg was Melanchthon, who distinguished himself by his supple and politic behaviour. In the afternoon of June 25, he caused the famous "Augsburg Confession," of which he was himself the author, to be read in the Rathaus in the presence of the Estates of the Empire.[1] The names of the Elector and Prince Johann Frederick of Saxony, of Margrave George of Brandenburg, of Dukes Franz and Ernest of Lüneburg, of Landgrave Philip of Hesse, of Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt and of the representatives of the Imperial cities of Nuremberg and Reutlingen were appended to the document.

When, during the sessions, the new faith and the steps to be taken towards peace came to be discussed, Melanchthon, greatly to the surprise of the Catholics, spoke as though the spiritual jurisdiction of the bishops was to be recognised by the Protestant party. The Papal Legate wrote letters to Rome which aroused high hopes, at least in the minds of the

[1] See vol. iii., xviii. 1, where more details are given of the Augsburg Confession and Diet.

more sanguine. It was only gradually that the Catholic party at Augsburg became convinced of the fact that they must exercise the utmost caution. The ambiguity of the promises made by Melanchthon rested on the fact, that acknowledgment of jurisdiction was tacitly restricted to those bishops who should declare themselves in favour of the new faith.

Melanchthon also made use of equivocation in the official document just referred to, i.e. in the Augsburg Confession of Faith (cp. vol. iii., xviii. 1). In the further negotiations with his opponents he was "only too much inclined to agree to ambiguous formularies and to make concessions not honestly compatible with the constantly repeated 'proviso,' that nothing contrary to the Gospel was to be conceded."[1] When, however, he showed himself shaky even with regard to the sacrificial character of the Mass, the anxious Lutherans at Augsburg thought it time to draw Luther's attention to the matter. It was pointed out to him by Lazarus Spengler that "our representatives at Augsburg are going rather too far" in their concessions to the demands of the Catholics.

Luther would not sanction any actual yielding, but was not averse to a little diplomacy. He replied to Spengler, on August 28: "I have written to him [Melanchthon] about this once before and am now writing to him again, but hope that there is no real need. For though Christ may appear to be somewhat weak, this does not mean that He is pushed out of His seat. . . . Though too much may have been conceded—as may be the case—still, the cause is not lost, on the contrary, a new struggle has been entered upon that our adversaries may be convinced how honestly they have acted. For nothing may be conceded above and beyond the Gospel, whichever party's '*insidiæ*' hold the field; for, in the proviso concerning the Gospel, '*insidiæ*' are embodied other than those which our adversaries can employ against us. For what is the wisdom of man as compared with that of God? Therefore let your mind be at rest; we can have conceded nothing contrary to the Gospel. But if our supporters concede anything against the Gospel, then the devil himself will seize on that, as you will see."[2]

[1] Walther, "Für Luther," p. 434.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 193 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 237).

This remarkable letter, with its allusions to the weakness of Christ, the proviso of the Gospel and the successful "*insidiæ*," calls for some further consideration. Luther reckoned on two things, as we shall see from his instructions to be quoted immediately. First, that the best way to escape from the difficult situation created by the Reichstag was to make general statements, which, however, were not to surrender any part of the new teaching; he was anxious to pursue this course in order to secure freedom for the Evangel, or at least some delay in the condemnation of his cause. Secondly, that though at Augsburg the evangelical spokesmen might be forced to give up some part of the new teaching, yet this would be invalid, since against the Gospe nothing can stand.

One can scarcely fail to see that one and the other of these calculations militated against any serious, practical result of the negotiations. They could only succeed in retarding any settlement of the question, though any delay would of course tend to strengthen Luther's cause.

We have also a Latin letter of Luther's to Melanchthon, bearing the same date (August 28), which throws even more light on their treatment of the Diet of Augsburg.

The letter describes the painful embarrassment in which Melanchthon found himself placed as intermediary after the advances and concessions he had made at Augsburg. Luther encourages him with strange arguments: "I am reassured by the thought, that you cannot have committed anything worse than a sin against our own person, so that we may be accused of perfidy and fickleness. But what then? The constancy and truth of our cause will soon set that right. I trust this will not be the case, but I say, should it be, even then we should have no need to despair. For when once we have evaded the peril and are at peace, then we can easily atone for our tricks and failings ('*dolos ac lapsus nostros*'), because His [God's] mercy is over us. 'Expect the Lord, do manfully and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord'" (Psalm xxvi. 14).[1]

This highly questionable counsel refers to the second of Luther's calculations mentioned above. He was not, how-

[1] On the interpretation of "*dolos, mendacia ac lapsus*," see Enders on this passage, p. 235, n. 3, and further on, vol. iv., xxii., and vol. vi., xxxvi. 4.

ever, forgetful of the first, and expressly tells Melanchthon that he will best elude difficulties by the general statement that "they were ready to give to God what was God's, and to the Kaiser what was the Kaiser's. . . . Let them [the opposition] prove what they assert, viz. that God and the Emperor were on their side." "Let them show that what they demand is according to the Word of God"; should they succeed, then they will have a right to hold the field, because all they were anxious to do was to obey the Word of God. With Luther, however, the Word of God was not really the Word of God itself, but what he understood by the Word of God. We cannot wonder if Catholics stigmatised this form of speaking as mere "dissimulation." Nor can it be matter of surprise that far-seeing Catholic representatives at Augsburg dreaded some snare on the part of the protesters. Luther's conception of the "proviso of the Gospel" which, according to his letter to Spengler, was under any circumstances to lead to the success of his cause, certainly shows their suspicions to have been amply justified. Luther was, however, wrong in imputing to them any wish to make use of similar "*insidiæ*" against his cause.

In a Latin letter of the same date Luther pointed out to his friend Jonas, who was also one of the theologians then at Augsburg, the course he himself had pursued at the Diet of Worms as the best example and rule to be followed at Augsburg. At Worms Luther had appealed in the presence of the Empire to the Word of God as binding on his conscience. "Whatever you may concede [to the opposition]," he says to Jonas, "never forget to except the Gospel, as I did at Worms, for here the circumstances are quite similar." Previous to this he had said: "Christ watches over His honour, though we may perhaps be asleep to our shame. Let them boast that you have yielded much, for they do not understand that they have not got the one and only thing for which we really care [the Gospel]. Let them have their way, those spectre-monks of Spires," he adds in German.[1]

Nevertheless, in his letter of September 23, 1530, to the pastor of Zwickau, Nicholas Hausmann, Luther speaks of the readiness of his party to make concessions in the matter of the bishops, as of a serious and important matter: the Catholic party had

[1] "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 236.

required concessions of them which could only be described as "filthy, shameful and degrading." "Our party have rejected their offers absolutely." And he continues in the same serious tone: "They offered to admit the jurisdiction of the bishops again, if these would see that the Gospel was taught and all abuses done away with; some festivals also were to be retained. Nothing, however, came of it. Our foes are determined upon their own destruction; their inevitable fate hangs over their heads."[1]

What he says to the Landgrave Philip of Hesse scarcely a month later, on looking back upon this matter, is less mystical and more diplomatic. The latter had expressed his "surprise" at the position which had been taken up at Augsburg towards the Catholics, and Luther was forced to seek an excuse. Here he represents the offers made as a mere pretence and thus comes, as a matter of fact, nearer to the truth than in the aforesaid letter to his zealous admirer Hausmann, which was anything but true to fact. We should assuredly have been guilty of a "fault," he says, and have acted to the detriment of our party, had our advances been accepted, but of that there was little fear; now, however, we profit by our offer, for we can represent ourselves as having been badly treated and thus we get an advantage of the Papists. "I trust that Your Highness will not take offence," so runs the passage, "that we offered to accept certain things, such as fasting, festivals, meats and chants, for we knew well that they could not accept any such offer, and it serves to raise our repute still further and enables me in my booklet to paint their disrepute still more forcibly. It would indeed have been a mistake on our part had the offer been accepted."[2] The Protestant author of the "Hessische Kirchengeschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation" thinks it necessary to make this extenuating remark: "The fact that Luther was here seeking to excuse himself will serve to explain the wording of this letter concerning his behaviour during the negotiations with the Catholics, which otherwise might be easily misunderstood." He thinks there was no question of any original intention of taking advantage of his opponents' good faith, but that Luther, merely as an afterthought, sought "to represent this as having been all along his intention."[3] But does this really suffice to establish Luther's honesty and uprightness in the business?

In agreement with what he had said to Philip of Hesse, in his "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen" (below, p. 391), which he was then writing, or at least thinking of, Luther made every effort "to enhance our repute" by instancing the ostensibly so conciliatory attitude of the evangelicals at Augsburg. He there speaks of the "humility, patience and pleading" which they "exhibited";[4] "our prayers and pleas for peace" were, however, "lost upon these obstinate men." "The Papists," he

[1] "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 270.
[2] October 28, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 295.
[3] F. W. Hassenkamp, 1, 1852, p. 297.
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 277; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 4.

declared further on, quite untruly, had refused to hear of peace, truth or reproof, but, "with their heads down," insisted upon waging war or raising a revolt. "Our offers, our prayers, our cries for peace" were all wasted. He gives no details concerning the spirit in which these "offers" were made.

The Emperor's attempts to bring about peace at the Diet of Augsburg, under the circumstances described above, were doomed to failure. It was impossible for the Reichstag to bridge over the chasm which was intentionally and artfully kept open by Luther and his party. The final resolutions which were drawn up in due form and proclaimed by the Emperor on November 19, declared that in matters of faith no innovations might be introduced; worship, in particular the ritual of the sacraments, the Mass and Veneration of the Saints, was to remain as before until a decision by an Œcumenical Council; any interference with or injury to churches and convents was forbidden; married priests were to be removed from their posts and punished; preachers were only to be appointed by the bishop; books were not to be printed without being submitted to the censors, etc. The enactment, that Church property which had been seized by the innovators should be returned without delay, was a source of particular displeasure to Luther's friends.

According to Luther the devil had triumphed at the Reichstag. "The spectre-monks of Spires," to use his own expression, i.e. the spirits of hell, according to him, threatened his enterprise with destruction.

The apparition of the phantom monks of Spires was one of the manifestations of diabolical animosity towards his teaching which troubled Luther greatly at that time, in his lonely retreat of Coburg. We here see the curious spirit-world in which he lived. A whole troop of fiends disguised as monks, so he had been reliably informed, had come to the Rhine at Spires at the beginning of the Diet of Augsburg and had been ferried across the river on the pretext that "they were from Cologne and wished to attend the Diet at Augsburg. But," so the story ran, "when they had crossed over, they all suddenly vanished, so that they are believed to have been nothing but a band of evil spirits."[1] Melanch-

[1] Fr. W. Schirrmacher, "Briefe und Akten zur Gesch. des Religionsgesprächs zu Marburg und des Reichstags zu Augsburg,"

thon looked upon the apparition of the "monks of Spires" as the presage of a "terrible revolt."[1] His son-in-law, George Sabinus, wrote a description of the incident in verse. Luther himself was probably more inclined to look upon these spectres as devils, because he had personally seen an apparition of the devil at Coburg, where Satan had appeared in the garden below his window under the form of a serpentine streak of light (cp. vol. vi., xxxvi. 3).

He was at that time dominated by fear and dread, partly owing to the proceedings at the Reichstag, partly on account of the unfortunate termination of the religious conference with Zwingli at Marburg,[2] where no understanding had been reached regarding the chief point under dispute, and partly also because in his solitude his old inward "temptations" and mental depression were again tormenting him. He was also suffering much from the result of over-work. A malady due to nervous exhaustion had, in 1527, so enfeebled him as to bring him to the verge of the grave. The malady now returned with similar, though less severe, symptoms. The spiritual desolation and fear, which were the consequence of his doubts, now again assailed him as they had done after his previous illness in 1527. Of this condition, Melanchthon, to whom it was familiar enough, wrote to Dietrich, that one could not hope to dispel it by human means, but only by recourse to prayer.[3]

"Satan has sent me his emissaries," Luther himself says of his sufferings; "I was alone, Veit and Cyriacus were absent, and Satan was so far successful as to drive me out of the room and force me to go amongst the people." He compares his mental state to a land dried up by heat and wind and thirsting for water.[4]

He observed to Melanchthon that as a rule he was weaker in such personal combats than when it was a question of the common weal, or of his public work.[5] This may serve to correct those historians who have nothing but "praise for Luther's assurance and cheerfulness" during the time when at Augsburg his cause stood in such imminent danger.

1876; "These reports were communicated to H.I.M." etc. Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 8, p. 186, n. 9.

[1] To Luther, August 8, 1530. "Luthers Briefwechsel," 8, p. 185: "*plane significat horribilem tumultum.*"

[2] See vol. iii., xix. 1.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 202. [4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

Luther's letters, previous to the breaking off of his followers' pretended negotiations at Augsburg, certainly do not breathe a spirit of interior peace. He says, for instance, to Jonas: "I am actually bursting with anger and indignation ('*pæne rumpor ira et indignatione*'). I beseech you to cut the matter short and come back home. They have our Confession and the Gospel. If they wish they can accept them, if not let them depart." Then there follows in the Latin epistle a characteristic exclamation in German: "If war is to come, let it come, we have prayed and done enough. The Lord has given them over to us as a holocaust in order 'to reward them according to their works' [2 Tim. iv. 14]; us, His people," Luther concludes, "He will save even from the fiery furnace of Babylon. Forgive me, I pray, my Jonas, for spewing out all this annoyance of mine into your lap; but what I have written for you is meant for all."[1]

That it was indeed meant for all he showed by publishing, in 1531, in anticipation of the "war" and in order that his party might not become a "holocaust," the "Warnunge Doctoris Martini Luther an seine lieben Deudschen."[2] In this work, while indulging in the most virulent abuse of the Reichstag, he declares, that in the event of a war or tumult no assistance was to be rendered to the Papists; legitimate self-defence demanded that such attacks should be met by resistance. The determination shown by Luther after the Diet of Augsburg to withstand the whole authority of the Empire is plainly manifest even now in the vehemence of the tracts which he proceeded to throw broadcast among the people. His purpose was to foster among the masses a spirit of opposition which should be a constant menace to peace.

Losing no time, he at once attacked the Imperial Abschied in a special pamphlet, "Auff das vermeint keiserlich Edict,"[3] which immediately followed the "Warnunge" and was soon being read throughout the German lands.

It is true that at the beginning he here affirms that it is not his wish to "write against his Imperial Majesty or any of the authorities, temporal or spiritual." Yet the whole

[1] On September 20, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 268.
[2] Reprinted in "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 276 ff.; Erl. ed., 25, p. 1 ff.
[3] Reprinted, *ibid.*, p. 331 ff., 49 ff.

work is nothing but a piece of frightful abuse against the decision arrived at by Charles V and against those Estates of the realm which had confirmed it. It is a mere artifice when he declares that he is merely inveighing against "traitors and other miscreants," whether "Princes or Bishops, who work their deeds of wickedness in the name of the Emperor," "particularly against that arch-knave, Pope Clement [VII] and his servant Campegius," for all the while, now with satire, now in deadly earnest, he is really attacking the Reichstag and the authority of the Empire. Incidentally we may mention that, quite oblivious of the Imperial command, he had launched this pamphlet amongst the people without submitting it to the censorship, and that in the very title he speaks of the "supposed Edict," though it was a question of an Edict issued in due form and signed and sealed by the Emperor. His distortions and misrepresentations, both of historical truth and of the Catholic doctrine as put forward at the Reichstag, are so gross that they deserve to be chronicled here.

Some of his misstatements were at once pointed out to him, in 1531, by Franz Arnoldi, parish-priest at Cöllen, near Meissen, in the "Antwort auf das Büchlein," printed at Dresden, probably at the instance of Duke George of Saxony.[1] "As many lies as words," exclaims Arnoldi;[2] "the devil, the father of lies and murderer of the human race," was anxious to support Luther by means of the "dissensions, disagreements and revolts" which had already been stirred up, and, for this purpose, had sent this shocking booklet among the people through the agency of his "familiar and customary instrument and tool, Martin Luther, that barrel brimful of abuse and slander." Over and over again Arnoldi expresses his conviction in the strongest and coarsest language, that "the apostate undoubtedly worked under the devil's own direction."[3] Luther's proceedings do not, however, stand out with sufficient clearness in Arnoldi's tract; indeed, the author was not competent to grapple with the task he undertook. For instance, he fails to show by examples how Luther, all through his pamphlet, makes use of dishonest devices. Thus Luther represents the Imperial Recess as laying it down that every-

[1] Reprinted, *ibid.*, p. 424=88.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 424 ff.=89.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 425=91.

thing which the Lutherans opposed was certain on the strength of the Gospel, or of a special inspiration received by the Pope, and that this applied even to real ecclesiastical abuses, to say nothing of certain pious customs not affecting the faith. Hoping to mislead the people, Luther tells them that whoever refuses to take Holy Water has, according to the Reichstag, fallen under sentence of death; that, according to the same source, "befoulment with holy things, pilgrimages and such-like" is a true revelation; that festivals and fasts, cowls and tonsure, payments to Rome and pious brotherhoods, come, according to the Papists, from the Gospel, in fact, constitute their only Gospel. By his "inspirations" the Pope sets himself above Holy Scripture, just as he makes himself Emperor and sets himself above the Emperor, particularly in "secular government." In support of this last statement he cites the Decretals, though his references prove nothing of the sort but rather the reverse.[1]

It will be worth our while to examine rather more closely Luther's system of polemics as it appears in his work "Auff das vermeint keiserlich Edict." Its utter unfairness was, indeed, calculated to rouse the masses to a pitch in which deeds of violence were to be expected.

Seeing that the Edict promulgated by the Reichstag merely leads people to "blaspheme God day and night," it were better to be a Turk than a Christian under such a banner. The Edict "abuses and slanders the married state"—because it does not tolerate those priests who "live a dishonourable life or with dishonourable women." It brings to nought the Word of God because it will not allow those to preach who teach, like himself, "that which is in accordance with faith in Christ." It entirely degrades the authorities by inciting them only to "murder, burn, drown, hang and expel" the people. "Let no one," he says, "be apprehensive of this Edict which they have so shamefully invented and promulgated" in the name of the pious Emperor, for in real truth it is the veriest devil's dung.

Many other almost incredible misrepresentations accompany his stream of eloquence. Bishops, cardinals and popes were merely squandering Church property "on women of easy virtue, on feasting and debauchery," whereas Luther and his followers employed for good purposes such possessions of the Church as

[1] Compare Luther's quotations and statements, p. 84, with the text of the Decretals given by Friedberg, "*Corpus iuris canonici*," 2, pp. 172, 196. In the latter passage we have the words, "*in spiritualibus antecellit (pontifex)*," with which every canonist is acquainted.

they had appropriated. If they did not hold them in very high esteem this was because so much "blasphemy" still adhered to them. The monks were stifled in their holiness-by-works; they were convinced, for instance, that they had infallibly won heaven by merely donning the religious habit. The clergy were a mere herd of "hogs and debauchees." Many of his statements were made expressly to excite the contempt and laughter of the masses. The clerical doctrine of good works, for instance, consisted in believing that whoever inadvertently swallowed a drop of water or a gnat before communion, was not permitted to approach the sacrament. According to him the clergy declared that "whoever had a smudge on his rochet was guilty of a mortal sin." Of himself and his preaching on faith he has it, that "he insisted more upon good works than Popery had ever done"; nevertheless, he would not have men seek salvation in their works without Christ, as the Pope taught, and as the sophistical authors of the Edict, "those imperial clerks and poets," believed.

Incidentally he seeks to lead the misguided people, who had no opinions of their own, to believe that the Catholic spokesmen who had rejected his doctrine of the slavery of the will, did not even know what the question at issue really was. They do not know "what free-will is; the Universities still disagree on the subject. . . . These great, rude, blockheads condemn what they themselves admit they do not understand"—as though, forsooth, a difference regarding the exact definition and meaning involved a doubt as to the existence of freedom.

In their Edict they condemn my doctrine of justification, he cries, though they themselves clearly recognise the contrary and, in the secret of their hearts, are on my side, knowing well that their boasts are but idle lies. In confident tones he asserts that he has been defamed by sophistical charges of supporting doctrines which were altogether strange to him and which he had never defended;—in point of fact, these charges were not levelled at him at all, but against the Anabaptists and others; he makes out the Edict to contain contradictions,—of which in reality not the slightest trace is to be found. The Catholic declaration that to receive communion under both kinds is in itself allowable, he distorts into a general permission. Because the giving of the chalice was no longer part of the discipline of the Church, he calls the Popes spiritual robbers of the faithful and overt enemies of their salvation. Add to this his misinterpretation of Bible passages, the pious tone artfully assumed here and there, his deliberate passing over in silence of certain questionable points, and his pretence of awaiting the decision of a general Council.

What has been quoted is sufficient to show the stratagems to which the author has recourse at the expense of truth, and the doubtful methods employed by him in his popular

controversial writings. Yet this work is by a long way not the most violent and malicious specimen of Luther's literary output.

We may wonder whether Luther, in the stress of his controversial struggle, was fully aware of the glaring dishonesty of his utterances. Certain it is that he was frequently carried away by anger and excitement. Some daring misrepresentations and inventions he reiterated so often that he may at last have come to believe them. Without some inward obsession playing upon his imagination such a phenomenon is almost inexplicable.

Although the contents of Luther's "Warnunge an die Deudschen" and "Auff das vermeint keiserlich Edict" incited people to resist the Emperor,[1] and thus far agreed with the demands of the revolutionary party, as made, for instance, by the Landgrave of Hesse, yet Luther was most careful to guard himself against any accusation of having preached revolt against the authority of the Empire. Previous to the publication of the "Warnunge" he had assured the Landgrave that the greatest caution would be exercised in the work, "so that it may not be stigmatised as seditious."[2] Later, too, he declared, quite at variance with the actual facts of the case, and notwithstanding the well-founded complaints of Duke George of Saxony and his own Elector's disapproval of the inflammatory character of his work: "In it I have not treated of anything in a seditious manner and no one will be able to convict me of stirring up revolt thereby."[3] He informs the Elector, that the two pamphlets were really not "sufficiently severe" considering the tone of his literary opponents; he was "only sorry that he had not used stronger and more violent language," whereas—the allegation is untrue, but was calculated to produce a powerful effect on the Elector—"unheard-of threats are contained in this horrible statute and sentence levelled against Your Electoral Highness and the members of your house, so that the sword and wrath of the whole Empire menaces Your Electoral Highness in life and limb, drenching Germany with innocent blood, making widows and orphans, and bringing destruction and devastation on the Empire."[4] He concludes: "May Our Merciful Father in Heaven comfort and strengthen Your Electoral Highness in His Word."

The Catholic Duke George of Saxony, a clear-headed man and good politician, owing to the attack made upon him by

[1] See vol. iii., xv. 3.
[2] On October 28, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 295.
[3] To the Elector, April 16, 1531, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 223 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 388).
[4] *Ibid.*, 54, p. 225.

Luther, descended into the literary arena at the time when the struggle was at its height, after the Edict of Augsburg, writing an anonymous "Gegenwarnung" against Luther's "Warnunge" and against his "Vermeint Edict." This was published by Arnoldi, who added an epilogue of his own.[1] The work is written in powerful language and abounds with good arguments. The Duke commences with the plain statement, that the innovator is after nothing else than making "us Germans disloyal to the Emperor and opposed to all authority." He points out with how great cunning and malice Luther had gone to work, telling countless lies, making a loud clamour and using endless artifices; this should be taken to heart by those who called him a living Saint and vaunted the spirit of God which spoke through him.

Having learnt the name of the author, Luther replied immediately in a booklet steeped in hate, entitled, "Widder den Meuchler zu Dresen gedrückt."[2] He fell upon the Duke with such insults, misrepresentations and calumnies that many Catholics, to whom Luther's conduct appeared ever stranger, shared the opinion expressed in George's reply, viz. that "Luther is certainly possessed by the devil, with the whole legion which Christ drove out of the man who was possessed"; if Paul was right in saying that the spirit was known by its fruits (Gal. v. 22), then Luther's spirit was "the spirit of lies, which spoke fond inventions and untruths through him."[3]

Luther, in his pamphlet "Widder den Meuchler, etc." abuses the author of the "Gegenwarnung" as an "arch-villain," a "horrid, impudent miscreant," a fellow who tried to deck out and conceal the "traitorous, murderous tyranny" of the Papists under the mantle of the charges of "revolt and disobedience" directed against him, Luther. He stigmatises all his opponents, more particularly the Catholic rulers, as "bloodthirsty tyrants and priests," as "bloodhounds" who have gone raving mad from malice, as "murderers who have shed so much innocent

[1] Reprinted in "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 416 ff.; Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 9 ff.

[2] Reprinted, *ibid.*, Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 446 ff.; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 108 ff. He calls the Duke an assassin because he had attacked him anonymously, as from an ambush, p. 447=111.

[3] In the pamphlet entitled, "Auf das Schmähbuchlein 'Wider den Meuchler,'" etc. ("Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 129 ff.), written by Duke George, but published under Arnoldi's name (p. 129).

blood and are still desirous of shedding more." They were "worthy offshoots, who believe our teaching to be true and nevertheless condemn it, and are therefore anxious for war and slaughter." He also declares he had never seen a "bigger and more stupid fool" than the author. "Now then, squire assassin! Speak up and let us hear your opinion. Shame upon your book, shame upon your brazen effrontery and malicious heart; how is it that you do not blush to lay bare your murderous and shameful lies before all the world, to deceive such pious folk and to praise and vaunt such obstinate bloodhounds? But you are a Papist, hence the infamies of the Papacy cling to you so that you have gone mad and spit out such shameful words."[1]

To describe the Catholic party at the Diet of Augsburg he makes use of the word "bloodhounds" six times within a few lines.[2]

The haste with which he dashed off the pamphlet was only equalled by his terrible excitement. He says at the end: "I have been forced to hurry for the Leipzig Fair [the book Fair], but soon I shall lick his gentle booklet into better shape for him. . . . I don't care if he complains that it contains nothing but evil words and devils, for that redounds to my honour and glory; I wish it to be said of me in the future, that I was full of evil words, vituperation and curses on the Papists. I have humbled myself frequently for more than ten years and given them nothing but good words."[3]

What he really should have done would have been to defend himself against the charge brought forward by George of stirring up revolt against the authority of the Empire. He not only failed to vindicate himself, but assumed a still more threatening and defiant attitude.

After contemplating these far from pleasing pictures we may be allowed to conclude by referring to one of Luther's more favourable traits. While, on the one hand, his soul was filled with deep anger against the Papists, on the other he was also zealous in inveighing against those who were threatening the foundations of those articles of the Christian faith which he still held in common with Catholics, and which he was ever ready to defend with the fullest conviction.

He foresaw that the freethinking spirit, which was involved in his own religious movement, would not spare the dogma of the Trinity. He was painfully alive to the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., p. 457=118.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 460=120. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 470=127.

fact that the arbitrariness of the Anabaptists presaged the ruin of the most fundamental of Christian tenets.

In a sermon preached in 1526, speaking of the doctrine of the Trinity, he had said: "The devil will not rest until he has managed to do the same with this dogma as with the Sacrament; because we have snatched it out of the jaws of the Pope and re-established its right use, turbulent spirits now want to tread it under foot. The same will happen in the matter of this article, so that we shall relapse into Judaism."[1]

A dangerous example of anti-Trinitarian tendencies had shown itself in Luther's immediate circle in the person of Johann Campanus, a native of the diocese of Liège, who had been a student at Wittenberg since 1528. This man boasted that he was the first since the days of the Apostles to rediscover the Gospel concerning the true unity or dualism of God.[2]

The doctrines of Campanus, which the latter submitted to the Elector of Saxony, made Luther very angry; he described them as "wretched doctrinal monstrosities" ("*misera monstra dogmatum*").[3] Their author he termed an enemy of the Son of God, a blasphemer, a child of Satan.[4] Against Campanus Bugenhagen published certain writings of St. Athanasius, with Luther's approval, and the latter also wrote a powerful preface to the edition. He wished, as he says, to strike a blow at those Italian or German-Italian Humanists, who denied the Trinity or were alienated from Christianity. In his exaggeration and bitterness he counted Erasmus, the author of "*Hyperaspistes*," among the "*Viperaspides*," pointing him out as one of the anti-Trinitarians who must be fought against.[5] In the preface he vents his indignation in his usual language: The

[1] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 148 f.

[2] In 1530, Campanus circulated a manuscript work, "*Contra Lutheranos et totum post Apostolos mundum*," which he then re-edited for the people as "Göttlicher und heiliger Schrift Restitution," 1532. One of his propositions was: "So sure as God is God, so surely is Luther a devilish liar" (Köstlin-Kawerau, 7, p. 323).

[3] To George Wicel (then on Luther's side) and Anton Hermann, April 1, 1530, ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 238).

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 323.

[5] The preface in "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 530 ff.; "Opp. Lat. var.," 7, p. 523; in the form of a letter to Bugenhagen in 1532 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 252).

doctrine of the Trinity, like the other fundamental dogmas, was now being attacked by the "slaves of Satan"; the example of St. Athanasius, the champion of faith in the Trinity, demonstrated, how, in order to defend it, we must be ready to stand against "all the fury let loose in hell, on earth and in the whole realm"; in our "altogether distracted age" it is necessary to "set up against these devils, these Epicureans, sceptics, Italian and German monsters, Him [God the Father], Who had said to Jesus, our Servant, 'Thou art My Son,' and again, 'Sit Thou on My right hand.' Thus we will wait and see if these giants come off victorious in their titanic struggle against God."

He recalls how, as a young monk, he had read these very writings of St. Athanasius "with great zeal in the faith," and informs us that he had received a copy to read from his pedagogue or Novice-master, written out in his own writing. He trusts that Bugenhagen's work will contribute to the glory of our Lord Jesus, Who, "through His boundless love for us has chosen to become the servant of us poor sinners," and that "the Lord will soon destroy all those giants, which is what we await and pray for day by day."

END OF VOL. II

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